

SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions.



S E R M O N S

ON

Several Occasions.

12. 2.  
SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions,

By the late Reverend

Mr HUGH SHORTHOSE,

Chaplain to His Grace

JAMES Duke of CHANDOS,

And Lecturer of Chelfsey.



L O N D O N :

Printed by R. REILY, and sold by Mr ASTLEY,  
at the *Rose* in St Paul's Church-yard, for the  
Benefit of his Widow. 1738.

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SE R M O N S

ON

Several Occasions

By the late Reverend



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THE  
PREFACE,

WITH  
A Short ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
AUTHOR'S LIFE.

THE Reverend Mr *Hugh Shortbosc*, Author of the ensuing Discourses, was born at *Amsbury* in *Wiltshire*, May 4, 1679. He was the second Son of the Reverend Mr *John Shortbosc*, Vicar of *Stanton Barnard*, and of *Uphaven* in the County

a 3 of

of *Wilts*, and Prebendary of the Cathedral Church of *Sarum*, who was a Gentleman of great Piety and Merit; and particularly well versed in *Classical Learning*. Our Mr *Shorthose* was for some time educated under his Father; but was soon removed to *Winchester-School*; where the Readiness and Quickness of his Apprehension, gave an early Indication of that Brightness of Genius, which afterwards shone so conspicuously in him. From *Winchester* he was sent to *Trinity College* in *Oxford*, where he made a considerable Progress in the Sciences, which are usually taught in that famous Nursery of Learning. But, by entering too soon into the Cares of the World, he

he was hindered from prosecuting his Studies so far, as his natural Inclination, and extensive Capacity might have carried him.

The first Account that we find of him in *London*, is in the Year 1706, when he was invited to appear as a Candidate for the Lectureship of *St Andrew's Church in Holbourn*. And here we need not wonder that he failed of Success: he who had a Soul too great to bow and truckle, as is too frequent on such Occasions. Mr *Shorthose* justly thought it misbecame the Dignity of his high Calling, to court the Multitude for Voices, and to beg from Door to Door to be an Hireling\*. His Sermon preached on that

a 4

Occasion

\* Sermon II.



Occasion will be a standing Monument, that there was one Clergyman, who dared to stand in the Gap, and stop the Tide of so base a Current.

But it was not long, before Mr *Shorthose* received some Reward. For, in the Year 1708, the Reverend Mr *Standish* Lecturer of *Chelfey* being dead, Mr *Shorthose* was proposed for his Successor: And though his Competitor was a very eminent Clergyman, the Reverend Dr *Langford*, Chaplain of the Royal Hospital, yet the Inhabitants of that Parish were so sensible of the Merit of Mr *Shorthose*, that

he

## *The PREFACE.*

iv

he had almost twice as many  
Votes as his Antagonist †.

Here he spent the Remainder  
of his Days, without enjoying  
any other Preferment, except  
that the Duke of *Chandos* was  
pleased to appoint him one of  
his Grace's Chaplains, and that  
he was made Chaplain to Co-  
lonel *Gower's* Regiment of Foot.

He died *Feb.* 4th 1734-5.  
And was buried in the Parish  
Church at *Chelfey*, without any  
Monumental Inscription, except  
that which is engraved in the  
Hearts of those, who had the  
Happiness to know him.

*Mr Shorthose*

† The Votes for *Mr Shorthose* were 89, for  
*Dr Langford* 46.

Mr *Shorttose* was of an affable and courteous Temper, mixt with a grave and ferious Deportment. He had a good Taste for Music \*; and was a Lover of social Conversation; but an Enemy to riotous Mirth, and the indecent Liberties which are too often used in mixt Companies, and pass with too many under the Name of *Wit*. He always expressed the greatest Aversion from impertinent and trifling Discourse †: But though he was not sparing of Rebukes on such Occasions; yet this severity did not hinder him from being himself an agreeable Companion: Nor was his Learning pedantick,

Or

\* See Sermon VII.

† See Sermon III.



or inconsistent with the Character of a *Fine Gentleman*. No Man was more sensible of the Blessings we enjoy under the illustrious Family, now happily seated on the Throne of these Kingdoms\*: And he often took occasion to exhort his Hearers to Loyalty, and to such Obedience, as becomes good Subjects, and good Christians. He was an earnest Recommender of Union amongst Christians, and very sollicitous to heal up those Breaches, which had so grievously divided this Nation both in Civil and Religious Affairs, and had raised up such a Spirit of Bitterness in the several Parties against each other, as will not soon be forgotten†.

The

\* See Sermon XIV.

† See Sermon I, VIII, XIV.

The Sermons contained in this Collection do not seem to have been intended for the Press by their Author ; excepting the two first, which appeared in print, more than thirty Years since, and two or three others, which were transcribed in a fair Hand. Therefore the Reader must not wonder, if these Discourses do not appear with a Correctness, worthy of Mr *Shorthose*. And in Truth, this Volume had not been offered to the Publick, if Mr *Shorthose*'s too great Contempt of worldly Riches had not made it necessary, that some Method should be taken to assist his afflicted Widow ; who lays hold on this Opportunity, to return her

## *The* P R E F A C E.

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her Thanks to those generous and well-disposed Persons, who have contributed to the Publication of these Sermons, for her Benefit.

His Memory has left so sweet an Odour in the NostriIs of his Family, that his Daughter hopes to be excused for not being able to refrain from expressing her Grief for the loss of such a Father, in the following Lines.

In



## The PREFACE.

*In softest Notes let me rehearse,  
 A Father's Praise commands my Verse;  
 Since 'tis a Father, you will pardon then  
 All the fond Passions of my gliding Pen;  
 Forgive the Errors that you here will see,  
 Think on the Subject, and you'll pity me.  
 Even now the glittering Tear steals o'er my  
 Cheek,  
 And my poor Heart, with heaving Sighs will  
 break;  
 Who in the Pulpit e'er that heard him preach,  
 And with such mildness did the People teach:  
 But what must all with justest Truth declare,  
 His Person graceful, whilst he charm'd our  
 Ear,  
 With moving Eloquence his Lips were hung,  
 And Sacred Truths flow'd from his Tongue.  
 In Conversation easy, and genteel,  
 Free from the Sourness which Pedants feel.  
 His Wit was poignant, sharp, and clear,  
 His Thoughts sublime, his Words sincere:  
 Firm to his Trust, and faithful to his Friend,  
 And from his Word was never known to bend.*

A LIST

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## A SERMON



**A**  
**S E R M O N**

**PREACHED at the**  
**CATHEDRAL CHURCH**  
**O F**

**St P A U L, London,**

**Before the Right Honourable the**

**LORD MAYOR,**

**A N D**

**Court of ALDERMEN**

**Of this CITY.**

**B**

Bedingfeld Mayor.

*Martis 26. die Novembris, 1706.  
Annoque Reginae Annae, Angl &c.  
Quinto.*

**T**HIS Court does desire Mr  
*Shorthose* to print his Sermon  
preached at the Cathedral Church  
of *St Paul, London*, on *Sunday* the  
*Twenty-fourth* instant, before the  
Right Honourable the Lord Mayor  
and Court of Aldermen of this City.

GIBSON.

To the Right Honourable the

LORD MAYOR,

AND

Court of ALDERMEN

OF THE

CITY of LONDON.

**T**HOUGH it was very far from my Thoughts ever to have published this Discourse, yet as soon as the Command of your Honourable Court came to my Hands, I presently resolved to pay my speedy Obedience to it: For however conscious I was to myself of the Weakness of this Piece, yet I by no means doubt but that it will meet with some kind Reception in the World, having already gained the

B 2      Approbation



## DEDICATION.

Aprobation of such an august Assembly. That your venerable Body may always continue to be what it at present is, Great and Good ; and that you may never want as worthy a Person as his present Lordship to fill the Chair, shall be the constant Prayers of,

Gentlemen,

*Your most Obliged, and*

*most Humble Servant,*

**Hugh Shorthose**

## 2 TIM. II. 23.

*But foolish and unlearned questions  
avoid, knowing that they do gender  
strifes.*

**T**HERE is nothing more certain SERM.  
or necessary than that every man I.  
who aims at any of the peculiar  
Perfections of his Nature, or  
makes the least Pretensions to Virtue, that  
he should have a clear and evident Know-  
ledge of the Truth; for otherwise he must  
be liable to great Mistakes, and run into  
numberless Inconveniences, by being obli-  
ged to take things upon Trust, and to con-  
tent himself with the bold Assertions of con-  
fident Pretenders: To prevent therefore our  
being imposed upon by false Appearances,  
and that in matters of the highest Conse-  
quence, we may not ignorantly be led by  
fond Opinions and distant Probabilities, it  
is highly requisite for us to be acquainted  
with the Rules of Reasoning, and to try to  
inform

SERMON. inform and improve our Nature; and by

I. Labour and Industry to dispel those dark  
 Clouds that do obstruct our Knowledge,  
 that so we may discover, as far as possible,  
 the Difference between real and pretended  
 Truths, and lay open the vain Fallacies of  
 artificial Sophistry, and rightly understand  
 the natural Connections and Consequences  
 of things: But then this Logick of ours  
 should serve for no other use but to instruct  
 and inform our Minds, and to disengage  
 them from Error, and to fix them upon a  
 right and firm Basis; that so we may be  
 thoroughly satisfied in our Judgments what  
 is our real Happiness, and what our Duty.  
 For this most certainly is the proper Busi-  
 ness of our Reason to fit us for Action, and  
 to lead us to our Duty; and therefore the  
 ultimate Design of all Study, and all In-  
 struction, should be to fix us in the Practice  
 of Virtue and Religion, and make every thing  
 else conspire to promote this; than which  
 there is nothing of greater Consequence, or  
 higher Perfection.

And most happy would it be for us  
 could we govern ourselves by this Rule;  
 but alas! such is our Misfortune, such is our  
 Folly, that we run counter to this, and take  
 the contrary Measures: For most of our  
 Time, and Labour too, we simply waste,  
 in running the Maze of winding Disputes  
 and



and endless Questions, and this makes us **SERM.**  
 very negligent in those things which should **I.**  
 convince us of the Excellency and Necessity  
 of our Duty; and inflame our Souls with a  
 lively and vigorous Sense of Religion: But  
 we eagerly pursue foolish and unlearned  
 Questions, and so over-run that which should  
 promote and encourage true Goodness in  
 us. This indeed sometimes (tho' rarely)  
 doth affect us; but then it is with a Pas-  
 sion, that tries to shew our Skill, and our  
 Learning, and our Zeal for Religion, whilst  
 we are very negligent in the Practice of the  
 least Part of what we say; and now is not  
 this the most monstrous Folly that can pos-  
 sibly be, for reasonable men to be guilty of  
 these gross Enormities themselves, and at  
 the same time be proud that they can  
 convince and demonstrate to the World that  
 these things ought not to be, and so very  
 gravely expose the Deformity of their own  
 Actions, better than they do those of their  
 Neighbours. Now this most certainly is  
 very wrong Proceeding, and perverting the  
 Use of our Reason, which undoubtedly was  
 given to arm us against Vice, and that we  
 might employ our Talent in shewing the  
 Bateness and Folly of it to ourselves, as well  
 as others, that so we may decline its Pra-  
 ctice, and persevere in the Duties of Vir-  
 tue.

SERM. And this is the right use that we are to

I. make of our Reason; and so long as we keep within these Bounds, we are safe, and need not fear the blackest Storms; but if we launch out too far in the frail vessel of Humane Reason, it is great odds but we strike against some Rock or other, sink into the Deep, and be for ever lost; to prevent therefore so fatal a Miscarriage, we should take the Apostle's Advice, and *avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they do gender strifes.*

In speaking to which Words I shall make it my present Business to perswade Men not to be too curious and busy in their Speculations, not to be too fond of their own Conceptions, nor proud of their art in managing controverted Questions; not to arraign Divine Truths at the Bar of Humane Reason, because the Consequence will be very evil; it will gender Strife, and be fatal to ourselves, and others.

And this we should avoid, if in the first Place we did but consider,

That all that Mischief and Confusion that hath been thrown upon the Face of Religion, and hath troubled the Order and Rules of our Church and Salvation, proceeds from nothing more than that Arrogancy of Mankind, which hath foolishly exalted Reason to be a Judge over Sacred and Revealed Truths,

Truths, and will not let Faith advance any S E R M.  
further, than Reason its Master will permit. I.

And so in the most mysterious Points of the Christian Religion, we must wander in the dark, if not conducted by this Light of Reason; and therefore because the Incarnation of the Son of God is not comprehensible by our Reason, and we do not understand the manner of it, it must be rejected as an Impossibility, and the whole Tenor of the Bible interpreted a new, nay racked and distorted, and obliged to speak the Sense of these curious and imaginative Sceptics.

Hence it comes to pass that the great Articles of our Faith are disputed; for if we consult the Oracle of our Reason, and set Revelation aside, then it will be a mighty Question, whether such great Truths as the Creation of the World out of nothing, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Destruction of the Earth at the last great Day, will be able to find Credit enough to maintain their Reputation amongst us; for it is most certain, that upon Enquiry, Reason will have but very little to say for the Credit of these important Verities.

And this is that feeble Foundation upon which the Atheists build their Principles, and cast off all Religion in general; and the reasoning Deists will have none revealed,  
because



SERM.  
I.

because that will bind and restrain their wild and extravagant Reasons, and check the Courier of their loose and ungoverned Appetites, and stop them in the eager Pursuit of those strange Abominations, which they would foolishly perswade themselves they had a just Right to by Nature. But St Paul will inform these Men what a vast Difference there is between the things taught by the Reason of Man, and the Wisdom of God; *for the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

And from hence it will follow that, in Matters of our Faith, it is not the Evidence of the thing revealed that we ought always and only to have Regard to, but it is the Authority of the Revelation, and the Assurance of the Divine Veracity, which ought to be the Standard of our Faith in all things which we cannot clearly understand; and this if rightly considered will have the same Force upon our Minds as any Demonstration whatever; for as it is God who convinces my Reason of the Truth of any Proposition, so it is the same God that speaks to us in his revealed Word; and therefore I may as well question whether two and three make five, as dispute and disbelieve any Truth after God hath spoken it, and declared

declared it to be so, tho' at the same time SERM.  
I do not conceive the manner of the I.  
thing.

If Mankind were left loose to themselves, and had only the Light of Nature and Reason to direct them, then indeed they might prescribe Rules for themselves, and follow their own Dictates both as to their Faith and Obedience; but since God hath laid Precepts before us and discovered his Will, tho' to us it should seem a hard saying, yet I dare promise no one will dispute his Power, and then it is not for us to demur or resist, because it is difficult, since it is that which makes the Virtue, and entitles the Obedience of our Faith to that Blessing which our Saviour hath promised to those who have not seen and yet have believed; whatsoever therefore is clearly revealed, doth immediately challenge our Assent, and become the Object of our Faith, because it is revealed; here we may place ourselves secure, safe from all the Assaults of Reason, and look down and see its vain Efforts, and how constantly that weak Faculty is baffled, so often as it pretends to meddle with any dazzling Object; for its Propositions mostly prove fallible, and its Deductions erroneous; nay Reason cannot conquer the least thing of moment; for all hidden Qualities are out of our Reach, and we are mighty Strangers

SERM. gers even to what our Senses meet with ;  
 I. the Wind bloweth where it listeth, and we  
 know not whence it cometh, nor whither  
 it goeth ; but from hence we will not dispute,  
 but that it doth pass and repass, tho' we know  
 not what it is, nor the manner of its motion,  
 why then in the mysterious Articles of our Faith  
 should we be staggered? Or why should we  
 question their Truth, because they are incomprehen-  
 sible? This ought rather to teach us to be humble  
 and modest, and to look into ourselves, and  
 contemplate the Emptiness of our Understanding,  
 that so we may submit our Reason to the  
 Wisdom of God.

But then in order to bring us to this, we  
 must heartily endeavour to conquer that nat-  
 ural inbred Pride and Stubbornness of our  
 Souls, which makes us so unwilling heartily  
 and thankfully to embrace the Divine  
 and Mysterious Parts of our Religion, for  
 he that will be a true Christian must pos-  
 sess his Soul with a teachable and willing  
 Temper, and free his Mind from all carnal  
 Prejudices, and worldly Delusions : For  
 whoever intends to enter into the Kingdom  
 of Heaven, must now receive it with the  
 Simplicity of a little Child. And it was  
 the want of these most Christian Virtues that  
 poisoned the Church in its Infancy with  
 Pride and Conceit, and that naturally pro-  
 duced



duced Errors and Blasphemies, the sad In-  
fection of which is not yet healed; for it  
is from thence arose all those strange Cor-  
ruptions which our eyes have seen, and  
which still do warm the Blood of vain  
Man, and make him boast of his Reason,  
and be proud of he knows not what.

But certainly this is not the Spirit of  
Christ, and his Religion, which ought to  
be so full of Meekness and Humility; it is  
not for Servants thus to dispute the Power  
of their Masters, nor for Men to put falli-  
ble and erroneous Reason in the ballance  
with the true and unerring Dictates of the  
Holy Ghost. Some of the great Truths of  
our Christian Religion are, like the Author  
of them, encompassed with a Cloud of Glo-  
ry; and God hath guarded the Approach  
to them, as he did the Tree of Life, with a  
flaming Sword, turning every way, and hath  
fixed a Gulph between us and them, which  
frail Mortals cannot pass, and therefore we  
cannot come near them and live. It is  
possible God may openly display the Beauty  
of them in another life, and make the plea-  
sing Discovery a part of our future Happi-  
ness, but at present we ought to content  
ourselves with an humble Contemplation of  
them, and deny ourselves that foolish Hu-  
mour of curiously reasoning and disputing  
those things which our Reason can by no  
means

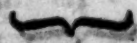
SERMON. means comprehend; and then this Modesty

II of ours will in the end turn to a much better account than the foolish and unlearned Disquisitions of those Men, whose Reason and whose Learning serves them to no better Use than to dispute sure and infallible Truths, and lead themselves into Error and Confusion.

There is a very remarkable Instance in *St John*, from which we may learn how to demean ourselves with Respect to our Faith, who when speaking of one of the greatest Mysteries of our Religion, doth in the most simple manner only make this bare Affirmation, that *there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one*: If it had been possible that our frail Nature should comprehend the manner of this Union, or if the Apostle himself had known, no doubt he would have been ready to communicate to the World, so important a Truth; but God hath not yet so far revealed himself to us, but hath hitherto been silent in this matter; this is what God hath veiled with Clouds and thick Darkness, and hid from mortal Eyes, which are far too weak to look into Light inaccessible; what Rashness and Madness is it then to draw too near this Mount of God, and foolishly endeavour to be wise beyond what is revealed? Fond and

vain

vain Men that we are, still craving for the forbidden Fruits, though we know the Con-  
sequence to be very fatal!

S E R M.  
I.  


How much better would it become us to employ that Reason and Light, which God the Father of all Lights hath given us, in paying our quiet Assent to whatever he hath been pleased to reveal: We know not well what ourselves are, neither at present can we conceive what shall be our Happiness in a future State, much less then can we find out the Almighty, or understand the Mysteries of the Trinity, or the Incarnation of our blessed Lord: But tho' these things transcend our Reason, yet so long as they do not contradict it, nor are themselves impossible; nay so long as they contain that in them which cannot but delight our Minds, and answer our largest Wishes, they ought to make us sensible of our own Weakness and Unworthiness, and very thankful to God for that part of Knowledge which we possess. Few or none of the Creatures can gaze upon the Sun, yet all are warm in its Influence; and tho' we cannot so clearly look into the Mysteries of Religion, yet if we please we may be very happy in its Practice. This then is the proper Subject of our Joy, and the everlasting Fountain of Praise and Thanksgiving: Let then all the faculties of our  
Souls



S E R M. Souls be employed in the highest Returns  
 I. of Gratitude to God, and his Son Jesus  
 Christ, and let us lay aside all jealous and  
 suspicious Thoughts of God, and root out  
 all the secret Seeds of Infidelity from our  
 Hearts, and let our Reasoning be like that  
 of Job's Friend, when he said, *Canst thou  
 by searching find out God? Canst thou find  
 out the Almighty to perfection?* By which  
 Words he shews how inscrutable are the  
 Measures of Divine Providence, which he  
 goes on and says, *is as high as Heaven, what  
 canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst  
 thou know? the measure thereof is longer than  
 the earth, and broader than the sea;* from  
 which Words we may learn how vastly the  
 Divine Wisdom doth exceed the narrow  
 compass of human Understanding, and there-  
 fore to think of giving a clear and positive  
 Answer to all those difficult Questions con-  
 cerning God and Providence, would not  
 only be a vain and unlearned, but a pre-  
 sumptuous Undertaking; such things there-  
 fore let us avoid, knowing that they do gen-  
 der Strifes.

But yet what hath been said must by no  
 means be urged as an Excuse for our being  
 lazy and supine in Matters that are adapted  
 and fit for our Reason; for if we are ignorant  
 of those Truths which relate to our Interest  
 and our Duty, it will be by no means suf-  
 ficient

ficient to plead Modesty and Humility: SERM.  
I.

For since God hath given us a Measure and Capacities of Knowledge, he expects that we should make a fair and an honest Use of them, and so to improve our Minds that our Reverence may be most profound, and our Obedience most strict, we should therefore heartily endeavour by Prayer and Supplication to *be able to comprehend with all Saints the Breadth, and Length, the Depth and Height of God's Mercies, and know the Love of Christ, which passeth all Knowledge.* And thus far we have seen what Bounds are to be set to our Reason, what are the foolish and unlearned Questions we must avoid, and what use we are to make of our Reason in the Pursuit of our Christian Duties.

But then there are very foolish and unlearned Questions in our Moral as well as in our Christian Practice; I shall therefore, in the second Place, earnestly endeavour to persuade myself and others to avoid these likewise: And this we should do if we did but consider that it is these foolish and unlearned Questions, and the Disputers of our Age, that have made all the Mischief that our Eyes have seen, and have troubled the Peace and Order of our Church and State. I need not mention to you what these foolish Questions are, or how far they have

C

been

SERM. been disputed to our Disadvantage; we are  
 I. all of us too well acquainted with them,  
 though it would be much better could we  
 all lose the Remembrance of them; but I  
 know not how it comes to pass, we are all so  
 firmly engaged, either on one side or other,  
 and there is such a Spirit of Contradiction  
 reigning, and Men so in Love with Dis-  
 pute, that even to mention a Question is  
 like giving an Alarm, and a Beat to Arms;  
 Men presently begin to look round them,  
 and cry out, Who is on my Side? Who?  
 And thus whilst these foolish Disputers fer-  
 ment Mankind, and make a Croud of Dis-  
 putants, every little Pretender thrusts in,  
 and makes as loud a Noise as the best;  
 Reason presently becomes the common Cry,  
 and every one pretends to large Shares of  
 it, though they had never any Acquaintance  
 with it in their Lives; and Liberty is what  
 they all pretend to drive at, whilst by these  
 warm Divisions we are foolishly enslaving  
 one another: Happy therefore would it be  
 for us could we take the Apostle's Advice,  
*avoid such foolish and unlearned questions*  
*which gender so much strife, and cause so*  
*much Debate.* And is it not very strange  
 that we should refuse our Obedience to this  
 Duty, when we have the most illustrious  
 Example to follow, and it is so constantly  
 recommended to us from the Throne, when  
 we



we have such Encouragements to it from Men in high Places, and our Governours seem to conspire to do us good, when our Rulers set us such Patterns, and God hath marked them out to be great and good, by making whatsoever they take in hand for to prosper, how base and foolish is it then for us to run counter to our Duties? nay to our Interests? by dividing and separating from the Body, and disturbing the Peace and Unity of the whole, the Consequence of which we must know cannot but be fatal: For there is nothing can be more destructive to a People than Separations and Factions, and nothing more naturally produces these than foolish and unlearned Questions. It would be too tedious and too melancholy a Task to relate to you the sad Story of the *Jews*, and to shew what strange Miseries their Factions led them into, and how by those means their noble City was burnt to Ashes, their famous Temple ruined and destroyed, and the whole Nation and People lost and undone for ever. I would ~~be~~ by no means have it thought that the Case is parallel between us and them, or any wise insinuate that our Condition is quite so desperate as theirs; but yet when Faction runs high, the Circumstances of a People can be but evil. Without doubt there are a great many good

C 2

Men

SERM. Men in the Land, who mourn in secret for  
 I. these things, and whose Souls abhor the Abominations that are done amongst us; and we cannot but think that it is their Piety, and the Care and Encouragement of that, which both by Command and Example hath been so constantly enforced, that hath hitherto secured us, and happy were it for us would we consider these things, and *know at least in this our Day the things that belong to our Peace, before they are hid from our Eyes*, before we, whilst we give Laws to the Universe, and are securing the Peace of *Europe*, foolishly lose our own, and by a wild Distraction ruin ourselves.

And now what shall I say more? but conclude this Discourse in an earnest Exhortation, that we should all heartily endeavour *as much as in us lies to live peaceably with all Men*; and above all, *that we would love one another, even as Christ hath loved us, and hath laid down his Life*; for by this will all Men know that we are his Disciples, if we have Love one for another: This is the proper Badge of a Christian, and which we ought always to put on; for without this Love and Charity, this affection for one another, our Hope, nay our Faith, is vain, and all other Virtues signify no more than *sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal*.

And yet, alas! how is this great Precept S E R M.  
of our Saviour's shamefully neglected by us, I.  
for how apt are we to quarrel, and to con-  
tend with one another, even in our private  
Conversation, and Intercourse in the World;  
and not only so, but what is most lament-  
able is, the unchristian Divisions, and Ani-  
mosities, that do so openly reign amongst  
us: Let us, my Brethren, expostulate this  
matter with ourselves calmly, and in the  
Spirit of Meekness, and *in the Name of our*  
*Lord Jesus Christ*, seriously consider, that  
we are all *Brethren and Christians*; that we  
have all one Father; that God hath created  
us all, and that we are all in a more peculiar  
manner Children of God, by Faith in Jesus  
Christ, and further, that we are all Members  
of the same Body, and mostly pretend to be  
of the same Church too; that we are all  
Partakers of the same Spirit, and Heirs of  
the same blessed Hope of Eternal Life; nay,  
further, that we are all countrymen, and  
closely linked together, by all the Bonds  
and Endearments that can possibly be; and  
all travelling together, to the heavenly Jeru-  
salem, our native Home; and is it not stark  
Nonsense then, for Brethren to fall out by  
the Way? How much better would it be-  
come us, nay, *how pleasant a thing would it*  
*be for Brethren to dwell together in Unity?*  
And it is still more strange that we do not



SERM. do so, when we consider, that what we

I.  differ in, is nothing but Trifles: Was the Difference in the great Doctrines of the Christian Religion, or in the necessary Articles of our Faith, or in any of the great Duties and Virtues of the Christian Life; was it in the Sacraments, or in any substantial Part of God's Worship, then indeed there would be room for Dispute, but it is very surprising, that doubtful Opinions, or Things of an indifferent Nature, should make any breach among wise Men; for these Things, are at a vast Distance from the Life and Essence of Religion, and are either good or bad, as they tend to Peace, or are made use of to Faction, and are by no means either Evil or Necessary in themselves, and shall these little Scruples weigh so far with us then, as to break our Peace, and endanger our Constitution? Shall we take our Neighbour by the Throat for an hundred Pence, and disregard the common Enemy, who is ready to charge us with ten thousand Talents?

It is certainly most evident, to every considering Man, that nothing can support our Liberties, and maintain the Reformed Religion amongst us, and fix our Church upon a Rock, but UNION among ourselves, and by sacrificing private Quarrels to the publick Good and Safety of the whole; and it

is as certain, that Sects, Factions, and Separations, can end in nothing but Confusion; for whatever Structure they make, must be like a Foundation of Sand, which tho' it may be a weighty Building, and make great Shew, yet cannot stand long, because it wants UNION at the Foundation, and for that reason, must necessarily want Strength; so that *when the Rains fall, and the Winds blow, and the Floods beat upon it, it must fall, and great will be the Fall thereof.* To prevent therefore such Misfortunes, let us free our Minds from Passion and Prejudice, and let us not insist upon little Cavils and Objections, to which the very best of Things are liable; for the greatest and clearest Truths in the World, are, and may be disputed; but let us avoid all such foolish and unlearned Questions, and however we may have wandered, yet *henceforth let us be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrines by the Slight of Men, and the cunning Craftiness of those, who lie in wait to deceive; but resolve never to meddle with those that are given to change.*

And if we would bring ourselves to this Temper, the Consequence would be most desirable; it would secure our Happiness in the other World, and make us easy in this, we may then expect all those Blessings God

S E R M. hath promised to a good and pious People,  
I. *He will send Peace in our Borders, and fill us  
with the Flower of Wheat, our Sons will grow  
as young Plants, and our Daughters be as  
the polished Corners of the Temple, our Garners  
will be full and plenteous, with all manner of  
Stores, and our Sheep will bring forth thou-  
sands, and ten thousands in our Streets; our  
Oxen will be strong to labour; and there will  
be no decay, no leading into Captivity; no  
complaining in our Streets. We shall be a  
happy People in such a Case, yea and a  
blessed People, having the Lord for our  
God. Amen.*





*The Free Choice.*

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A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED upon the

ELECTION

OF A

L E C T U R E R

I N

*St Andrew's Church, Holborn,*

*June the 2d, 1706.*

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Published by Request.

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ST. MARK'S CHURCH

ELECTION

LECTURER

St. Mark's Church, Helston

June the 17th 1706

Printed by R. Gifford

TO THE  
GENTLEMEN  
OF THE  
VESTRY

OF  
St *ANDREW*'s Holborn.

**N**OTHING should have prevailed upon me to expose this hasty and incorrect Piece, but the earnest Request of some of yourselves, and that because you were pleased to urge, That it would be of Service to the Publick : And therefore I shall make no other Excuse in its Defence, only, That it was honestly and well meant, which gives me Hopes it will be so received,



## DEDICATION.

received, especially by you, to whom  
it is devoted: If it should do any  
good, or, at least, provoke a better  
Pen to appear in the Cause, it would  
highly answer the Design of,

GENTLEMEN,

*Your most obliged*

*and humble Servant,*

**Hugh Shorthofe.**

## ACTS I. 24.

*And they prayed and said, Thou Lord,  
which knowest the hearts of all  
men, shew whether of these two  
thou hast chosen.*

**T**HERE is nothing in our Age SERM.  
that hath done so much Discredit II.  
to the Christian Religion, nor raised  
so much Tumult and Disorder, in the  
Breasts of the Professors of it, as a furious  
Zeal, that hath been constantly shown in  
most Elections to Offices, both Ecclesiasti-  
cal and Civil; it was this that gave the  
fatal Distinction of high and low, and made  
Brethren and Kinsfolks, (they knew not  
why) run counter to the Peace and Interest  
of one another; it was this that raised all  
those Storms and Tempests; that so much  
ruffled

S E R M. ruffled the Nation, and shook the Peace of  
II. both Church and State.

Well, therefore, would it be for us, could we bring ourselves to a more calm and sedate Temper, so that we may weigh and consider things well, and be acquainted with the Merit of the Cause, and the Persons, before we engage in a Party, or give our Hands or our Words to do any thing, which perhaps afterwards we shall be convinced we ought not to have done: And we cannot guard ourselves better against such Accidents as these, than by observing the Apostle's Method here mentioned in the Text. For this is an Instance exactly framed to our Purpose, a Spiritual Promotion was void, Judas had miscarried, and another was to be chosen in his Room; the time of Election being set, they gathered themselves together, and prayed and said, *Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew which of these two thou hast chosen: and they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias.*

As to these last Words of giving forth their Lots, which was their Manner of chusing, this I shall wholly wave, because Commentators themselves do not justly agree how it was done, or if they did, I should not think that we were obliged to the same Rule; for if we suppose it an extraordinary Case,



Case, and that there was a remarkable Providence in casting the Lot upon *Matthias*, then this is what we cannot expect, because there is no further need of Miracles; and we must know, that God doth not reveal himself to Men after the same Manner, in these as in former Days: Or, if we take these Lots to be an indifferent manner of chusing, which was then customary amongst them, then it will appear as reasonable, to submit ourselves to the Customs that are practised in the Country and Place where we live, so long as they are decent and modest, and not misbecoming a Christian to follow.

All that I shall therefore here endeavour to advance, is that we make Use of the same Simplicity, the same Sincerity, and Integrity of Mind as the Apostles did, that we pray and say, *Thou Lord which knowest the hearts of all men shew whom thou hast chosen.* And this I shall lay,

*First*, As a Duty upon ourselves, who stand here to be chosen: And

*Secondly*, Upon you who are to chuse.

And, *First*, ourselves; and here far be it from me to offer any Reflection upon the Characters of those worthy and ingenious Persons, that have or are to appear here: I must confess, what I am going to offer is so true and plain, that I am before warned it will not please: But since this Theme hath been

SERM.

II.

been so generally neglected, and Men with one Consent seem to run down into Sense, there is an absolute Necessity that somebody should stand in the Gap, and stop the Tide of so base a Current; and therefore I cannot forbear to say that Men, nay that my Brethren have very much deviated from the Apostles Rule, and have forgot to leave themselves in the Hands of God, but have taken such Methods of compassing Spiritual Promotions, as very much misbecome the Preachers of the Gospel, to court the Multitude for Voices, and to beg from Door to Door to be an Hireling, is rendring the Gospel cheap, and is a Scandal and Shame to the Christian Religion; and really to me it is Matter of great Wonder, how Men of liberal Births and Educations can submit themselves to any thing, that is so base and mean, especially when I consider what a Clamour and Noise here hath been made about Liberty and Property; and it hath been the common Theme of the Pulpit, how dear they ought to be to us: And now after all, we seem to embrace Slavery ourselves and to subject our Neighbours likewise; for if we must thus bow and truckle, and get our Interest by Courtship, that is a Slavery for us, and if we do so, and not leave the People free, I am sure they are in Bondage. But I will not dwell any longer upon

upon these unpleasing Strains, I am sorry there is Occasion to say so much, and I heartily wish there was Room for no more. But if we would take away all Reason for Reproach, we must forbear to compass our Designs by any base or mean action, but offer up our Prayers to Almighty God that he would guide and direct us in the whole Course of our Lives, and then leave the Event to him who hath the Hearts and Secrets of all Men in his Hands, and doth move their Counsels, as seems best to his divine Wisdom. But by this I would not insinuate, that we must be supine, or lazy, and give up ourselves so wholly to Providence, as to use no Endeavours, or do nothing ourselves no, let us not mistake, we have a great deal of Work and Labour upon our Hands, and that of the highest Concern to all Mankind as well as ourselves; for we were just now told, *That we must watch, we must stand fast in the Faith, we must quit ourselves like Men and be strong:*

And therefore you will pardon the Digression whilst, in showing what we ought to be, I speak to each of these Particulars.

First then we must watch, and not let any Opiate be so strong as to lull our drowsy Faculties, whilst we are engaged in the Care of our Brethren, and our Church; no Con-

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fideration

S E R M.

II.



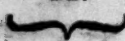
SERM.

II.

consideration whatsoever, either of Honour, or Preferment, of Gain or Profit, should charm considering Men so far, as to make them forget the Interest of the whole, of which they themselves are a Part, and if neglected, must necessarily perish with it: If therefore Watchmen sleep, no Wonder if the House be broken up; if Watchmen cry Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace, no Wonder if we be surpris'd; if Watchmen in whom there is the greatest Trust reposed, prove false, and tell of Dangers where there are really none, and blind those that are truly so, what can be expected but Shame and Confusion. It is true indeed, that whilst we are imprisoned in Flesh and Blood we are subject to a Multitude of Temptations; and such is the Frame of our laps'd Nature, that it seems to have a perpetual Thirst after earthly Pleasures; and this is the Cause that our Passions so often grow too strong for our Reason, and lead us Captive into Shame; it highly concerns us therefore to be very watchful, and to rouse ourselves from our golden Dreams, and not suffer our Thoughts to be lulled in the bewitching Charms of any worldly Pleasure, but let us watch, lest we become like the Field of the Sluggard, and be all overgrown with Thorns and Thistles. And from this watching none of us can be excus'd; for our Saviour presseth

it on all with the most enforcing Reason, in these Words, *Watch ye therefore for ye know not when the Master of the House cometh, at Even or at Midnight, at Cock crowing or in the Morning, lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping; and what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.* But then we must stand fast in the Faith; we live in an Age in which most of the Fundamentals of our Faith have been questioned, and the Articles of our Religion so disputed, that Men of meaner Capacities scarce know what to make of them: it is Matter of great Importance therefore, that we be well-grounded and fixed in our Faith; for when Men are not well rooted and established in their Principles, they are apt to be inveigled by the crafty Insinuations of Seducers, and to be moved with every Wind of Doctrine, and to be shaken in Mind by every trifling Piece of Sophistry, and so become an easy Prey to those, who have not only a Pleasure and Pride, but an Interest in making Profelytes: It is true, a Man should always have a Mind ready to embrace Truth when it is fairly proposed, and be glad to be convinced of an Error when he finds himself in the wrong, and we should have a Love and Charity for all Men, tho' of what Perswasion soever: But tho' Christian Charity ought to be very large and extensive yet in Matters

S E R M. of Faith we must not add, nor diminish,

II.  for the Sake of any Person, or any Thing, for there is no Principle of Latitude in our Faith, and therefore we must not move to the right Hand nor to the left, upon any Consideration whatsoever; besides the main Things of our Religion are so plainly revealed, and lie so obvious to every ordinary Capacity, that he that runs may read them; and therefore we ought to be unmoveable in them, and not suffer ourselves to be baffled out of them by any insignificant Noise about divine Gifts, and God knows what Illuminations; for Truth, as it is always constant to itself, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever, so they must be who teach, and follow it, they must not be wandering Planets, but fixed Stars, and have no uncertain Motion: Let us therefore stand fast in our Faith, in that antient and primitive Faith, of which all of us have made Profession in our Baptism; and in this let us stand fast against the cunning Insinuations of all sorts of Seducers, against the Terrors of the World and the Temptations of Fashion, and against the base and sordid Desires of worldly Interest, and Advantage; *Let us, my beloved Brethren, be stedfast, and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

But



But to go on with the Apostle's Directions we must quit ourselves like Men; and this is a Duty which above all others, we ought to have the greatest regard to, and which, if neglected, will expose us to the greatest Shame, and make us become worse than the Beasts that perish; to quit ourselves like Men, is to answer the End of our Creation, and to perform that for which we were chiefly designed by our Maker: For as all other Creatures were created for the Service of Man, so Man was created for the Service of God only, all other Creatures act according to the Dictates of Nature, and the Impulse of Sense, and their highest Enjoyments consist only in the Gratification of their fleshly Appetites; but Man was made after a more noble Way; no fatal Necessity compels his Choice, no Force drives him on to the Commission of any Thing without his own Consent: For God hath endowed him with a reasonable Soul, and given him a Capacity to distinguish between Good and Evil, and hath highly exalted him above the rest of his Creatures, and hath made him Lord of this lower World, and left him no Tribute to pay, but only to his Maker; and so long as he honestly dischargeth that, he acts like a reasonable Creature, and quits himself like a Man! But when Men begin to place their Affections

SER M. on this World, and to fall down before any

II. of the Pleasures of it, when they pay that

~~~~~ Honour and Esteem which is due to God alone, to any sublunary Vanity, then we descend far below the Nobleness of our Nature, and dwindle into Brutes; nay we become in every Sense worse than they: For after they have taken a full Gust of their sensual Enjoyments, they extinguish; their Life passeth into the soft Air, and they are no more: but it is not so with Men, we must indeed sooner or later all of us surely go the Way of all Flesh, and to the Dust from whence we came, thither we must return; but then after the Dissolution of these fleshly Bodies of ours, we have immortal Souls which shall survive, and in a Place of Bliss or Woe remain for ever. If therefore we will quit ourselves like Men, we must set our Affections on Things above, and not on Things of the Earth, we must live like reasonable Creatures, who know that they have no continuing City here, and therefore it highly concerns them to seek that which is to come. And if we would do so, we must mortify our earthly Desires, and deny ourselves, not love the World, neither the Things that are in the World, not lay up for ourselves Treasure upon Earth, where Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through  
and

and steal, but lay up for ourselves Treasure SERM.  
in Heaven; and take Heed and beware of I.  
Covetousness, for a Man's Life consisteth not  
in the Abundance of the Things which he  
possesseth, it is therefore a Duty incumbent  
upon all those that fight under Christ's Bar-  
ner, and will quit themselves like Men, to  
wean their Affections from this World, and to  
raise their Minds above the Desires of it.

And in these, and in all other Virtues,  
we ought to be very strong, but not with  
the Arms of Flesh; for God hath no Plea-  
sure in the Strength of an Horse, neither  
delighteth he in any Man's Legs. There is  
a strange Sort of Temper reigning among  
some Men, which like a furious Torrent,  
drives all Things before it; whatsoever with-  
stands their mistaken Notions, or fond Opi-  
nions, like a Bay raises the Flood of their  
Passions, and therefore must be removed;  
they, like the warm Apostles, are presently for  
calling down Fire from Heaven, to consume  
all those that do not act and think like  
them; but this is not to be like minded with  
Christ, who was meek and lowly in Heart,  
full of Forbearance and long Suffering; and  
he hath told us, that those who take up the  
Sword shall perish by the Sword: And  
therefore, tho' Religion is to be defended,  
yet it is not to be propagated by Persecution  
and Rapine, especially that Religion, which



S E R M. ought to be so full of Meekness, and Humi-  
 II. lity: But by this I would not insinuate that  
 any just and lawful Means should be omitted  
 by us, whereby we may raise the Honour of  
 our Profession, and keep Men from trifling  
 with the most sacred Matters of it; therefore  
 we must endeavour, as much as in us lies, to  
 live peaceably with all Men; yet we must by  
 no means stoop so low, as not only to have  
 ourselves, but our holy Religion trampled un-  
 der Foot, but in such Cases we must be strong,  
 and not be beat from our Posts. But that in  
 which we ought to be most strong, and in  
 which indeed most of our Strength doth  
 consist, is in our Lives and Conversations;  
 it is true, we are bound to preach and to  
 inculcate the Precepts of our Master, but  
 nothing hath so powerful an Influence upon  
 the Minds of Men as Example, which by  
 a Sort of magnetick Virtue doth attract and  
 assimilate, we know not how: It is there-  
 fore Matter of the highest Moment, that  
 we exert our Strength in this Sense, and  
 that we by our holy Lives and Conversation,  
*Bring forth such Fruits that are meet for  
 Repentance, that others seeing our good Works  
 may glorify our Father which is in Heaven,  
 and take Example by them;* for else it will  
 be to no Purpose, to go about to perswade  
 Men that we do heartily believe that Gos-  
 pel, which obligeth Men to whatsoever  
 things

things are true, whatsoever things are honest, SERM.  
whatsoever things are chaste, whatsoever II.  
things are lovely, and of good Report. If   
we ourselves have no Regard to these things  
in our Lives and Conversations, we have for  
a long Time since been proud of the shining  
Name of Reformed, and may with Reason  
boast ourselves to be Members of the best  
Church in the Christian World, but yet if this  
Reformation does not reach our Lives, as well  
as our Doctrines, it will serve only to make  
us ridiculous in the Sight of Men, and  
odious in the Eyes of God; for if our Doc-  
trine teacheth Men to live better than others,  
and to be more true and just in all our Deal-  
ings, and to bear no Malice nor Hatred in our  
Hearts, but to do unto all Men as we would  
they should do unto us, and to love and  
serve God with an honest and sincere Heart,  
and yet we fail in all these things ourselves,  
where then is the Art we foolishly boast of?  
and what signifies all this Clamour and Noise  
about Religion? as therefore we respect the  
Honour of God, the Interest of our Church,  
and of ourselves, we must give good Ex-  
amples, and be strong in our Lives and Con-  
versations, we must be burning and shining  
Lights, to those that are wandering in the  
dark Paths in this World we must be strong  
to mortify our Lusts, and curb our Passions,  
and sincerely endeavour to grow in every  
Grace

SERMON. Grace and Virtue, and to abound in all the  
 II. Fruits of Righteousness and Holiness; then  
 indeed we shall become our Profession, and  
 take away that great Prejudice, that hath so  
 long hindred the Progress of the Gospel;  
 then our Religion will look with a pleasing  
 and inviting Countenance and oblige our  
 Enemies to confess, that of a Truth God is  
 with us; then we shall walk from Strength  
 to Strength, and at last our Light will break  
 forth to perfect Day.

And thus far I have in a manner been  
 speaking to ourselves, I mean we who  
 are Candidates for this holy Employ: But  
 by this, I would not have any Man here  
 think, he is excused from these great Duties,  
 and that they belong only to one Body of  
 Men; it is true, they do more nearly relate  
 to us, and we are bound to lead forward in  
 these noble Paths of Honour; but then you  
 are obliged to follow, else it would have  
 been very wrong in me to have addressed  
 myself to a Set of Men, few of which may be  
 present if with them you likewise were not  
 equally concerned; but be assured, you also  
 are bound to pray and say, *Thou, Lord, which  
 knowest the Hearts of all Men, shew whom  
 thou hast chosen.*

And this is what I propose, secondly, to  
 consider; but I shall not dwell long upon  
 this Head, because I have been pretty te-  
 dious



dious in the former, and there needs but little more to be offered to you, than what hath been said, only that you ought to consider, that this Business before you is by no means of a temporal Concern, therefore you must not be bias'd by any worldly Consideration. You ought therefore to lay aside all Prejudice and Passion, and all manner of Partiality, and to consider what a Matter of vast Moment and Concern it is that we are about; that this Election is not for yourselves only, but for your Neighbours, and those that are near you, and for the Honour of God, and his holy Religion; and therefore no Love, no Respect, no Friendship, no Relation, must interfere with it, nay Charity itself must stop here, and we must be forced to shut up our Bowels of Compassion; for though my Charity should tell me, that this Man hath Necessity, yet if my Judgment say the other hath Desert, it is here I must stick, and Justice must be done, let the Consequence be as it will; especially in a Matter of so high a Concern, which relates to God, ourselves, and our Neighbour: But last of all, you are to consider, that you are in the Presence of that God who knoweth the Hearts of all Men, he knoweth the very inmost Recesses of your Thoughts, and judgeth not as Men judgeth. He can trace all the subtle  
Fibres

SERM. Fibres of the Heart, and knows the secret

II. Springs by which they are moved; he knows  
 what guides our Actions and whether we  
 have settled our Affections upon the right  
 Object: It highly concerns you therefore to  
 Discharge your Conscience with Sincerity  
 and Truth, and that you may do so you  
 should labour, as much as in you lies, to  
 have it rightly informed, by banishing all  
 manner of Designs from your Hearts but  
 purely that of doing good; and be sure let  
 this be part of your constant Prayer, *Thou*  
*Lord, which knowest the Hearts of all Men*  
*show whom thou hast chosen* And when  
 God Almighty hath shown you, that is,  
 when you are convinced in Conscience what  
 to do, then be sure to keep close to its Dic-  
 tates, and let no Perswasion whatsoever, no  
 Consideration in the World, ever make you  
 act contrary to the Conviction of your own  
 Mind; but above all Things, take Care of  
 that grand Misfortune, of breaking out into  
 Parties, and Factions; for be assured while  
 one is of *Paul*, another of *Apollos* you must  
 be carnal. Let all Things therefore be done  
 in Peace, and Unity, without Clamour,  
 without Noise, and without Partiality. And  
 now from what hath been said, Men ac-  
 cording to their different Appetites will  
 make their different Censures, and draw out  
 the Character of the Person, and the Thing  
 according

according as their Passions are moved: The S E R M.  
Difficulty of pleasing I am well acquainted II.  
with, by the Example of those that have  
gone before me, and I must by no means  
expect to fare better than my Neighbours;  
but be that as it will, it is still our Duty  
to please God rather than Man; and Truth  
tho' never so meanly drest will always  
appear lovely to ingenuous Minds: Let  
others therefore make what Judgment they  
please now, yet I am sure, that very soon  
they will think what hath been said no bad  
Counsel. For when the Veil of Sense shall  
be taken off and the Scene of this World  
drawn, and Death and Judgment shall make its  
Approach, then we shall all cry out, and pray,  
and be assuredly convinced that God know-  
eth the Hearts of all Men, then to have a  
Conscience void of Offence towards God and  
towards Man, must be Matter of the high-  
est Consolation. It is too apparent that  
whilst the Springs of Life are quick, and  
the Blood flows sprightly in our Veins, we  
are apt to converse with corporeal Things  
and to receive too great a Bias from them,  
the World doth deceive us with false  
Glasses, which represent Things in other  
Shapes than what they really are, so that  
the whole Course of our Lives is little better  
than a Thread of Mistakes, and a passing  
on from one Weakness to another. He that  
finds.



S E R M. finds himself uneasy in one unreasonable

II. Choice, hath Recourse naturally to another  
 it may be as unreasonable; if we hunger we are unquiet then, if we eat to the full we are uneasy too; and yet let a Man be never so sick of the Error, the promised Pleasure of the Variety still leads him on out of Hopes of mending the Matter, and thus we are cheated and abused by this vain World but still we pursue our Folly, just as Children chase Butterflies, who when they think they are nearest their Game and are just ready to lay Hand on the desired Prey, the wanton Creature suddenly flies from them, and with an envious Wing removes himself farther off than at the Beginning of the Chace. And though these Things be never so true in themselves, yet how difficult is it to bring Men to a true Sense of them now: But in the Day when the Keepers of the House shall tremble, and the strong Men shall bow themselves, and the Grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the Windows be darkened, and the Doors shall be shut in the Street, and the Sound of the Grinding is low, and all the Daughters of Musick shall be brought low, when Men shall be afraid of that, which is high, and Fears shall be in the Way, and Desire itself shall fail, when the Silver Cord shall be loosed, and the Golden Bowl be broken,

broken, when the Pitcher shall be broken at S E R M.  
the Fountain, and the Wheel at the Cistern, II.  
when Man is going to his long Home, and  
the Mourners go about the Streets, when our  
Dust is returning to the Earth as it was, and  
our Spirit just ready to return to God who  
gave it, when all these sad Presages of our  
approaching Dissolution shall come on, then  
if it please God to grant us our Time and  
our Reason, we shall have another Set of  
Thoughts, and Things will appear in quite  
different Shapes unto us; for when we come  
to turn the other End of the Perspective  
upon the World, then all those Things which  
seemed so near, so big, so lovely, and so de-  
sirable, will dwindle and decay, and be  
removed at a vast Distance from us, and  
all that will be discerned will be Emptiness,  
or nothing, worse than nothing, Vanity and  
Vexation of Spirit. Then there will be no  
Pleasure but in true Virtue, nor no Fruit in  
any Thing but having done much good, and  
that will be the ablest Cordial to hold up  
our drooping Spirits, in our last Agonies  
and Convulsions: Let us therefore make the  
same Judgment of Things now, as we know  
assuredly we shall do hereafter, when we  
shall miserably lament the Loss of every Op-  
portunity of doing Good, which we to our  
endless Sorrow, have omitted, when we  
shall look back and see how happy we  
might

S E R M.

II.

might have made ourselves, and how easy too, but now by our own Folly we lie under the terrible Fear of that fatal Sentence, *Go ye cursed*: O dreadful Word! not to be mentioned without Horror, nor to be thought of without Astonishment! How miserable, for ever miserable shall those be whom God shall bid depart from him! that therefore we may avoid so fatal a Miscarriage; that we may live with Comfort, and die with Assurance, and having been good and faithful Servants, may be received into the Joy of our Great Lord and Master: Let us live up to the Fundamentals of our Religion; let us love and serve God with an honest and sincere Heart, and let us love our Neighbour as ourselves, and do unto all Men as we would they should do unto us: And be sure let us still remember that God knoweth the Hearts of all Men, and therefore we must be very careful to keep our Consciences clear and undefiled. These Rules if we will observe, then our Light will break forth in Obscurity, and our just Dealing be as the Noon-Day. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*A Sermon*



# SERMON III.

## *On bridling the Tongue.*

JAMES I. 26.

*If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain.*

**C**OULD a Man divest himself of his Passions, and look calmly and quietly into the World, and coolly consider the Vein of Conversation that at present prevails, it would be enough to sicken him to human Society, and make him willing to steal off the Stage where there is so little native and sincere: for human Nature seems to be disbanding, and Mankind becoming Beasts of Prey one against another; for every Corner hath a Toil, and wherever you tread there is Danger of a Snare.

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I am

SERM.  
III.

S E R M.

III.



I am not so melancholy nor ill-natured, to think that the present Age is the very worst of all, or that no Time hath produced so great Monsters as our own, human Nature being much the same both in us, and in our Forefathers; and when assaulted with equal Temptations it has generally produced the same Effect. But this I believe may be allowed as a true and general Observation of all Nations, Kingdoms, and People since the World commenced, that as they grew to be (what we still too fondly covet to be) more polished and refined, so they farther departed from their native Simplicity and Integrity, and as they entred into nice breeding, and grew more great and courtly, so Sincerity dwindled and Corruptions prevailed, and this naturally lead them to the Dregs of Times, and to the pouring out of Vengeance.

All Story both sacred and prophane confirms this, and every Period of Time concludes with such Demonstration.

I will not from hence be led to prophecy; I do not love an ungrateful Message: and if possible had much rather prevent than foretel Ruin; but yet I cannot help saying that Sincerity is at present very much wanting amongst us, that our very Language is running into a Lye; and that Men have almost perverted the Use of Speech, that great Endowment

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Endowment of a Rational Creature, and SERM.  
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have made it to signify little more than

the Folly and Vanity of the Speaker: So that there is great Occasion to make Use of that melancholy Wish and Complaint of the Prophet. *Oh that I had in the Wilderness, a Lodging-place of wayfaring Men, that I might leave my People and go from them, for they are an Assembly of treacherous Men; they bend their Tongue like their Bow for Lies, but they are not valiant for the Truth upon the Earth. Take ye heed every one of his Neighbour, and trust ye not in any Brother; for every Brother will utterly supplant, and every Neighbour will walk with Slanders. Thine Habitation is in the midst of Deceit; one Man speaketh peaceably to his Neighbour with his Mouth, but in his Heart he lieth in wait. How many such pretending Saints there are every where to be found, is but too apparent; Whose Words are like Oil, yet they be very Swords: Surely such Men, how smooth and fair soever their outward Appearance may be, yet when they come to be laid open, they will make but very rough Draughts of Christianity, and stand highly in need of the Apostle's Correction. If any Man among you seem to be religious, and bridletb not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, that Man's Religion is vain.*



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In speaking to which Words, I shall offer at these two Things. *First*, Consider some of these irregular Motions of the Tongue, and how we should bridle them. And *Secondly*, offer at some Motives that may induce us to govern that *unruly Member*. But before I proceed to these it will be of Use to us, to take a little Notice of the first Expression in the Text: *If any Man seem to be religious*. For in Truth we too often only seem to be so, for we may observe, that the Generality of Men content themselves with a general and loose Profession of Religion. They indeed declare their Faith in the Gospel, and that they readily assent to what is there revealed; but then this Faith hath no vital Principle in it, that warms and spurs them to Action; it does not prevail with them so far, as to engage them in a strict Course of Holiness and Virtue, nor to bring forth those Fruits that are meet for Repentance; but they content themselves with trudging on in the beaten Road of being numbred in the established Church and Society of Christians, and some Times frequenting the publick Worship and Sacraments, and keeping themselves free from those gross and notorious Immoralities, which are forbid not only by the Laws of God but Men too, and which if committed would render them uneasy here and incur a temporal

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a temporal as well as spiritual Punishment. They keep some Modesty and Decorum in their Actions, otherwise their Conversation would be unacceptable; and they are often led into some pious and religious Duties by Reason of the good Company that attends them there. And this in short is the Sum of too many Mens Christianity; so that these Men would have been *Jews* or *Pagans* had they been born in Time and Place, where such Religion did prevail. For nothing but Custom, Fear of Punishment, and Reproach, and Unwillingness to be singular, makes them what they are. As for their Faith, that is confused, floating, and superficial, hath not been considered enough by them, to take the least Root; and therefore it is not to be wondred if it produces no Fruit: at least none of a sound and enduring Substance at best it can be only seemingly good.

Now if any Man among you thus seems to be religious and bridletb not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, that Man's Religion is vain. So then the bridling of our Tongue is a sort of Mark and Touch-stone, by which we may know, whether a Man be really religious, or only appears and seems to be so.

This being thus premised, I proceed to consider some of the irregular Motions of

SERM. the Tongue, and how we should bridle  
 III. them. And this is so boundless a Theme  
 that I know not where to begin, and it is  
 as difficult to know where to end; for the  
 Mischiefs that arise from this little Member,  
 are endless; and if they were all to be re-  
 counted, scarce the World would contain  
 the Books that must be written. It will be  
 impossible therefore in that small Portion of  
 Time that is at present allotted us, to run  
 thro' the whole Government of the Tongue,  
 and consider it in all its Parts, I shall there-  
 fore confine myself at this Time, to treat  
 only of that most common and prevailing  
 Vice of the Tongue, which hath taken such  
 deep Root and spread itself so far as to be-  
 come the most relishing Sauce to almost all  
 Conversation. I am perswaded I hardly need  
 name the Thing we are all too well ac-  
 quainted with; *Slander and Calumny, Back-  
 biting and secretly Defaming* one another.  
 But however we may please ourselves, in  
 exercising our witty Talent this way; yet if  
 we will take *Solomon's* Word in this Case,  
 he plainly tells us that *he that uttereth Slan-  
 der, is a Fool*. And if this be true, then  
 alas for ourselves! For in truth, amongst us  
 Slander hath almost lost its Nature, and is  
 no longer an odious Sin; but a genteel Air,  
 a pleasing Entertainment, and Piece of nice  
 Breeding; and People give themselves the  
 utmost



utmost Liberty this way, without thinking of giving the least Account either to God or their Neighbour. In fine, the Case is become such, that whoever hath in him any Love of Truth, any Sense of Justice or Honesty, or one Spark of Charity towards his Brethren, will hardly be able to find out such Conversation, as he can be easy with, and converse in, with a safe Conscience.

Now this being the State of Things, and obvious to every Man's Experience; nothing certainly can be more useful than our hearty Endeavour to check this mighty Evil; and in order to do so, it will be needful for me to describe some of the different Kinds of Slander: For in our Conversation in the World, we shall find it wandering in various Shapes, and sometimes so disguised as not readily to be known. The worst kind of this, is that forbidden in the ninth Commandment, *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour*: Thus David complains; *false Witnesses did rise up against me, they laid to my Charge Things that I knew not*. This is what is too often practised in the Courts of Judicature, and is the highest Offence and Act of Slander, and therefore when detected, the Punishment is as becomes the greatest Villanies; but besides these, there are Knights of the Post, almost every where to be found, who with Impunity daily wound with their

SER M. false Reports, and kill with their poisonous  
 III. Breaths, and cast Contagion wherever they  
 come. Another kind of this is our venturing to give Characters of our Neighbours, and so by some of our rash and indiscreet Censures, we may impose more blame upon a Man than he can ever after possibly shake off, As for instance, suppose we say of a sober and chaste Man that he is impure and intemperate; Now such Scandal rarely fails to take Place; and then it being general, how can a Man clear himself of that Imputation; especially with those who are not thoroughly acquainted with his Life and Conversation. All sort of loose and general Expressions therefore, that turn to his Disadvantage is such a terrible Way of casting Poison, and loading him with so grievous a Burden, that the most innocent Person cannot possibly discharge himself from. Alike to this, is the common Way of Censure when we call the frugal Man, covetous; and the generous, profuse; when we call the cheerful and free, vain and loose; and the serious, sullen and morose; when we ascribe a Man's Liberality and Charity, to Vain-glory and Popularity; and his Strictness of Life and Devotion, to Superstition and Hypocrisy; When we pass such Censures upon the good and innocent Practice of our Neighbours, we are vile Slanderers, and imitate

tate the Devil, who when he would lessen S E R M.  
the Credit of *Job* with the Almighty, slyly III.  
insinuates, *doth Job fear God for nought?* 

Such sort of Censures is putting ourselves in the Room of God, and judging our Neighbour's Heart, which we cannot see; and therefore in Charity ought always to hope and believe, and judge, and speak the best. Another sort of Slander is, when we pervert the Words and Actions of our Neighbours, or when we make a partial and lame Representation of them. And here it will not be sufficient Excuse for us that we report nothing that is false; for however true what we report may be, yet if it be only a Part of the Speech and Action, and uttered with a malicious and deceitful Heart, it may be justly deemed a moral Lye: Thus whatever serves to imprint false Notions, and produce hurtful Effects to our Neighbour, is a Slander; so that there are slanderous and uncharitable Truths, as well as Falshoods; and we should be as careful of telling all that is true, as of reporting any thing that is false: For deceiving is the proper Work of Slander, and Truth abused serves often to this End; and therefore, no doubt, labours under the same Guilt. Another sort of traducing is, when we instil Suggestions and crafty Comparisons concerning our Neighbour, which often hath a wonderful Operation



S E R M. tion upon jealous and credulous Minds; for  
 III. in this way it often happens, that even  
 Commendation itself is used with intent  
 to breed dislike and ill-will, towards the  
 Person commended; for it opens the Passage  
 for Dispraise, and renders the Accusation fol-  
 lowing more credible, especially when the  
 Slanderer adds, that, notwithstanding all the  
 Good he hath been telling, he is sorry that  
 there is so much Evil behind; it is surprizing  
 what great Effect this sort of Dealing hath  
 upon tender Minds, how softly it insinuates  
 Mischief, and leaves deep Impressions hardly  
 ever to be defaced. Another kind of Slan-  
 der, and a very common one, is when we  
 magnify and aggravate the Faults of our  
 Neighbours, when we raise small Miscarriages  
 into heinous Crimes, and slender Defects,  
 into odious Vice; when we swell common  
 Infirmities, into disorderly Practice; and so  
 represent the *Mote in our Brother's Eye*,  
 much bigger than the *Beam in our own*.  
 This, no doubt, is a vile and cruel Slander,  
 for it is not only ill-natured to make a  
 wound where there is none, but it is like-  
 wise tormenting to make a real one wider;  
 for so it gives greater Apprehension to  
 the Beholders, and more Pain to the Suf-  
 ferer. In Charity therefore we should ex-  
 tenuate the Faults of others, and in common  
 Justice we should never advance them; for

as no Man is free from some Defects, or S E R M.  
can live exempt from some Misdemeanors, III.  
so was this Practice of enlarging our Brother's Faults, constantly indulged, and did not Charity some times take Place, every Man might be rendered very odious; and the best Examples and the best Characters might be made infamous. And under this Head of Slander I cannot help taking Notice of a most prevailing but most abominable Practice, and that is concerning the Behaviour of the World to them that *minister in holy Things*. Men are not content to wreak their Spleen with those Miscarriages which are flagrant and open, they are not satisfied in representing those Faults that appear in the most monstrous Shapes and darkest Colours, but they are daily sifting after new Tales in order to add to the Weight of that Character which already labours; and, if possible, to make a Breach in those who are yet untouched. The great Mischief that is done this way is almost unspeakable, for not only the Persons slandered are hereby injured, but the great good they should do in their Office is also prevented; so that by this sort of Calumny not only the Persons Fortunes, Families and Reputation, but the Souls of Men are endangered, and robbed of that great Benefit which God and the Law hath provided for them :

S E R M. them : So that this is a Crime of an higher  
 III. Nature and more fatal Influence than Men  
 are generally aware of ; for it is not only  
 the single Person or the Body of Men a-  
 gainst whom their Spleen is conceived, will  
 suffer ; but many of our innocent Neigh-  
 bours will be in great Danger to perish by  
 such Contagion. And it is observable, that  
 the only prevailing Motive with the Men  
 of the Age to encourage this Practice, is,  
 that they imagine that they cover their own  
 Faults when they display others ; and that  
 the Vice and Infirmities of the Gown is a  
 Warrant for their Villany : Weak Reason-  
 ing ! For Men ever to hope to lay the Bur-  
 then of their Sins, upon other Mens Shoul-  
 ders ; or to think that their Torments, will  
 be one Jot the easier, by reason that some  
 of their Leaders may possibly incur the same  
 Fate : A Man would think that the very  
 Folly and Senselessness, as well as the Rude-  
 ness of the Thing, should keep Men of any  
 common Honour or good Nature from such  
 vile Proceeding ; but by sad Experience we  
 find the Case is much otherwise, even a-  
 mongst the Pretenders to nice and courtly  
 Breeding. And now I could heartily wish  
 that we of our own Church, were not  
 chiefly peccant this way ; for it is certain  
 that Men of all other Perswasions are much  
 more tender of the Characters and Reputa-  
 tion



tion of their Teachers, than we are, let their Mis-  
 carriages and Misfortunes run never so high;  
 yet they tell it not in Gath, nor publish it in  
 the Streets of Askelon, lest the Daughters of the  
 Philistines rejoice, lest the Uncircumcised tri-  
 umph. But I must not insist farther on this  
 Head, lest I provoke Men to run into that Guilt  
 which I am perswading them to avoid; and as  
 there is no Evil that can attend us in this Life,  
 but that some Good may be learned from it,  
 so from hence great Profit may arise. I do  
 not say that any thing can excuse those whose  
 Mouths are open against all Things that are  
 sacred, and who show their Zeal to Religion  
 by their Usage of its Professors: But from  
 hence the Teachers of the Gospel may learn  
 to look more narrowly and circumspectly to  
 their Ways that they give not Occasion to  
 the Enemies thereof to blaspheme.

S E R M.  
 III.

And thus I have discovered to you some  
 few of the dark Windings of Slander, out  
 of that vast Multitude, and disguised Mass  
 that is for ever lurking in all Conversation,  
 and constantly pursues us through every Stage  
 of our Lives. And now for the present,  
 quitting the Tale-bearers, it is absolutely ne-  
 cessary that I address myself in a few Words  
 to the Receivers of them: And here the  
 Proverb is literally true, *If there was no Re-  
 ceiver there would be no Thief*; if there was  
 no Encouragement to Tatlers there would

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be no Tale; he therefore that giveth willing Audience, and credulous Approbation, that cherisheth the Slander, he is a Partner in the Fact, and a Sharer in the Guilt: for there are slanderous Ears as well as slanderous Tongues; not only the Invention is wicked, which engenders and breeds Lyes, but the Assent is so, which helps to hatch and foster the Cockatrice. It is not only the spiteful Mother that conceiveth such spurious Brats, as must bear all the Blame of them; for the Midwife that brings them forth, the Nurse that feedeth them, the Guardian that trains them up, and setteth them abroad in the World, all these contribute to their Subsistence, and knowing them to be Monsters, ought to have stifled them in the Birth, else they will surely be responsible for the Mischief they produce; for in Truth were it not for such free Entertainers, such Nourishers and Encouragers of News, strange Things, and Tales, Slanders commonly would die in the Womb, or entering into the cold Air would presently be chilled, and for want of Nourishment would starve and expire, but it is such Friends and Patrons of them, who are the Causes that they live, and are mighty. They it is who set ill-natured and designing People upon devising, searching after, and picking up idle and malicious Stories: So that, were it not for such

such Customers the Trade of Backbiting SERM.  
 would be lost; for many pursue it, only III.  
 out of a servile Temper in order to flatter  
 and tickle the ears of some Superiors, whom  
 they are obliged to court and sooth after  
 this Manner, and who foolishly imagine  
 that they may innocently sit at home and  
 receive such Visitors, and upon such Evi-  
 dence, have Authority sufficient to pass Sen-  
 tence upon their Neighbours. But let not  
 our own Heart deceive us, for if we would  
 exempt ourselves from all Guilt of Slander,  
 we must not only forbear from venting it,  
 but we must abstain from paying the least  
 Regard or Countenance to it; for the wise  
 Man sayeth *he is a wicked Doer who giveth  
 heed to false Lips; and he is a Lyar who  
 giveth Heed to a naughty Tongue.* And now  
 I must not stay to give any farther Account  
 of Slander, only besides its vile Nature that  
 it is the common Refuge of Idleness, the  
 Practice of Lingers and Loiterers, who be-  
 cause they will not or can do nothing worth  
 mentioning themselves, know not how to  
 use their Time but in visiting and prating,  
 must be reflecting upon and lessening the  
 Doings of others, and rather than say no-  
 thing, are resolved to talk impertinently:  
 St Paul shews his Indignation at such Per-  
 sons, when he says that *they learn to be  
 idle, wandering about from House to House,*  
 and



SERM. and not only idle, but Tatlers also and busy  
 III. Bodies, speaking Things which they ought not.

He that speaks much, and of his Neighbour, labours under great Temptations to speak Things which he ought not, and he is some times unavoidably led to it, even contrary to his Design; great heed therefore must be taken unto our Ways if we would not offend with our Tongue: For (to add but one Observation more) nothing is more obvious to common Experience, than that Men who in all other Department appear blameless, yea who seem nice and precise in other things, yet are extreemly to blame this way: We may see many who restrain and deny themselves many things, yet indulge a strange Licentiousness in speaking whatever their Humour or Passion dictates. Men there are who would by no means injure the Person or Fortune of the most offending, and yet commit horrible Outrages with their Tongues upon all that come in their way; it is frequent to see Men very punctual and honest in their Dealings, and yet most unjust in their Language. They will not cheat nor rob, but yet they detract and traduce and take away your good Name, a greater Robbery than that of your Fortune. They who abhor shedding Man's Blood, will yet without Scruple or Remorse murder his good Name or Reputation, which is often more precious

precious than Life itself; Men who are commonly moderate in the Enjoyment of Pleasure are yet very intemperate in speaking, and most incontinent of their Tongue; Men in all other Parts of Morality temperate and sober, are often in this very wild and dissolute; nay we may observe, that even mighty Pretenders to Godliness and Zealots in Devotion cannot forbear speaking things, plainly repugnant to God's Laws, and prejudicial to his Honour. And which is still more remarkable, there are in these our Days Places set apart on purpose, by both Sexes, for the evil Exercise of the Tongue, to which Men repair as to the Schools of Anatomy, in order to dissect human Nature, only with this Difference, the Artist never mangles our Bodies till dead, and that to improve his Knowledge for the Use of the living; but these cruel Men tear us piece-meal, cut us up whilst yet alive, and that for no other end but to vex and torment us. And I wish I could affirm that even our solemn Meetings, the very Place and Season of publick Worship, was wholly free from this Vice; for I fear it often happens that Men come hither rather to prate and view than to receive Instruction; and at their return can give a better Account of the Carriage, Dress, and Deportment, of their Neighbours, than of any thing that hath been offered for their

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Salvation,

S E R M. Salvation, and it is great Odds but some light  
 III. silly Story or other, takes up and amuses  
 those precious Moments which ought, at  
 least at that time, to be seriously employed  
 in the *things that belong to their Peace*. Now  
 if such be our Case, as upon due Reflection  
 such most assuredly will appear to be our  
 Case, then it is high Time to seek after some  
 Cure to so great a Malady, that we offer at  
 some Remedies for this Pestilence that walk-  
 eth in Darkness, and this Arrow that destroy-  
 eth in the Noon-Day.

Proceed we therefore in the last Place, to  
 offer at some Motives that may induce us  
 to govern the irregular Motions of our  
 Tongue. And we should be prevailed upon  
 to do this, if we did in the first Place con-  
 sider the great Ease, Quiet, and Satisfaction,  
 it would bring to ourselves; for let us look  
 back and consider our past Lives and we  
 shall presently see, into how many fatal  
 Miscarriages our Tongues have led us. There  
 are very few of the Calamities that attend  
 human Nature in which the Tongue is not  
 some ways or another concerned: How  
 many noble Heads has it brought to the  
 Block, and how much Honour has it laid  
 in the Dust. There is hardly any one Vice  
 that disturbs human Nature more, or gives  
 so much Trouble to our restless Minds; it  
 is easy to imagine the vast Anxiety, Pain,  
 and



and Grief, that Thousands at this Instant S E R M.  
labour under, upon the Account of their III.  
Tongues, and it is not all the promised  
Secrecy that can possibly support them, for  
no sooner are our Words passed from us  
but we are presently convinced that we can  
never recal them; we are that Instant out  
of our own, and have put ourselves in the  
Power of another, and it is great odds but  
he immediately betrays us; and if that does  
not presently happen yet Fear and Jealousy  
distract our Minds: The Dishonour to our-  
selves, the Loss of our Friend, the Injury  
done to our Neighbour, tear and torment our  
Breasts, and make our Days tedious and our  
Nights long; and let the Person be never so  
insignificant that our Tongue hath wounded,  
so that at present it may not be in his Power  
to return the Dart: And this indeed gives  
often Occasion for barbarous Tongues very  
cruelly to handle Persons in Misery; yet a  
wise Man will consider that such is the va-  
rious Rotation of human Life, that very  
often the most abject and abused get the  
Ascendant, and then we have little Reason  
to think that he will not redouble the Blow.  
As therefore we have any Regard for our-  
selver, for the Ease and Tranquillity of our  
own Minds, it highly concerns us to *bridle*  
*our Tongues.* Another Motive to the same  
Purpose is, the publick Peace of the World,

SERM. and the Care and Concern we ought to have  
 III. for the mutual Satisfaction of one another.

Man was not made for himself only, but for the Help and Assistance of others; we are sociable Creatures, *it is not for Man to be alone*, so that were we left wholly to ourselves, even in a Paradise, it would be a brutish, melancholy, and condemned State: It concerns us therefore to look closely to the Rules of Friendship, and Amity, and to maintain all the Bands of Society; and to secure all these there is no better Method than to bridle the Tongue.

For if that be let loose, like an impetuous Torrent, it breaks all Bounds, and drives all Things before it; for what vast Effusion of Christian Blood hath it often occasioned, and how much ill Blood hath it raised almost in every private Conversation and Neighbourhood: The Apostle sadly complains of this when he says, *The Tongue setteth on Fire the Course of Nature and is set on Fire of Hell, it is an unruly Evil full of deadly Poison*. Could we therefore sweeten those bitter Waters, correct the Gall and Overflowings of the Tongue, the World would be a much more quiet and peaceable Habitation than at present it is; and we might eat our Bread with much more joy, and drink our Wine with a merrier Heart; all Fear, Jealousy, and Suspicion would be taken

taken away, and Men would act with much S E R M.  
III.  
more Candour, Freedom, and Pleasure, and

God's Will would be done on Earth, almost with the same mutual Satisfaction, as it is done in Heaven. But last of all, the great Motive that should induce to this Practice, is, that otherwise our *Religion is vain*: *If any Man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, that Man's Religion is vain.* So that the same may be said of this, as St Paul saith of Charity: *If I speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, if I bridle not that Tongue, it profiteth me nothing*; and to this Purpose the Scripture is very clear, and positive: Hear the Words of the Psalmist, *Who shall abide in thy Tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy Hill? he that backbiteth not with his Tongue, nor taketh up a Reproach against his Neighbour*; add to these that infallible Testimony of our Saviour, *That of every idle Word we must give Account in the Day of Judgment, that by thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be condemned*: *Judge not therefore, that you be not judged.*

Let us all seriously consider these Things, and I hope they will not fail to make us take up *David's Resolution*, and carefully take *Heed unto our Ways, that we offend not with our Tongue.* Most admirably good to



SERM. this Purpose is the Advice of the Son of  
 III. *Sirach: He that can rule his Tongue shall  
 live without Strife, and he that hateth bab-  
 bling shall have less Evil; rehearse not unto  
 another that which is told thee, and thou  
 shalt fare never the worse, whether it be to  
 a Friend or a Foe, talk not of other Mens  
 Lives, and if thou canst without Offence, re-  
 veal them not; for he heard and observed thee,  
 and when time cometh, he will hate thee; if thou  
 hast heard a Word let it die with thee, and  
 be bold, it will not burst thee. Admonish a  
 Friend, it may be he hath not done it, and if he  
 have, that he do it no more; admonish a Friend,  
 it may be he hath not said it; and if he have,  
 that he speak it not again; admonish a Friend,  
 for many Times it is a Slander, and believe  
 not every Tale.*

And now I shall conclude this Discourse,  
 with one general Observation upon the  
 whole, which is that from what hath been  
 offered here; there is not the least Encou-  
 ragement given, I am sure none designed,  
 to that artful and complaisant Manner of  
 Speech which at present so much prevails,  
 and in which Truth and Falshood are so cu-  
 riously blended, that it is Matter of great  
 Difficulty to distinguish the one from the  
 other; for in Truth, unless Men are a little  
 versed in this Trade of Diffimulation, as the  
 Vein of the World at present runs, Honesty  
 will

*On bridling the Tongue.*

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will soon become Bankrupt, and the innocent ruined only for being open and sincere: SERM.  
III.

This is a very melancholy Consideration, that in Order to be in the Fashion, and converse with Men upon equal Terms, a Man must in some measure abandon Truth and Honesty; and what still aggravates the Shame, is, that thus it is to be courtly: But this, my Brethren, is what moral Heathens were ashamed of, and what Christians should abhor. Tho' therefore *Truth is not to be spoken at all Times*, when it administers evil to our Neighbour, without Service to the Publick, or Justice to ourselves; yet is it never to be silent, in order to cover Flattery, encourage Vice, or advance Pride, or deceive our Brother: Such Practice is so base, low, and mean, that really it is Matter of great Surprize how it came by the Possession of so many noble Breasts, how they can stoop to it themselves, or indulge it in others. I know there are many powerful Temptations to this Vice, and that it is very difficult to be great indeed, without being false; yet I dare promise that if Men would rightly compare Things, and be impartial in their Judgments, they would find more real Comfort and Satisfaction, and more true Honour too, in an honest and open Deportment, in an easy and quiet Conscience, than in the most lofty Titles, and

SERM. extended Bags; and if so, who then would  
 III. be at such mighty Pains, to court, and cringe,  
 and fawn, and lie, in order to make himself  
 uneasy here, and unhappy hereafter? For if  
*any Man among you seem to be religious and*  
*bridleth not his Tongue,* but misuseth that  
 noble Faculty of Speech, which God hath  
 given us, to advance his Honour and our  
 own Happiness, and which when otherwise  
 applied, we *deceive our own Hearts*; that  
 Man's Religion is vain; and then I am sure  
 his Misery is certain: From which forlorn  
 State, God of his infinite preserve us all  
 thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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SERMON



## S E R M O N IV.

*Against Polygamy.*

MATTH. xix. 8.

- - - *But from the beginning it was  
not so.*

I Stand here at present, to defend the Doctrin of SINGLE MARRIAGE against that of POLYGAMY, according to a Promise some time ago made, when I was earnestly desired to handle this Subject. This I shall now labour to do, to the best of my Power, without soothing, itching, or offending, chaste Ears; so then, without any farther Apology, I shall pursue my Design, in the Manner my Text seems to point out to me: To consider how this Matter stood in the Beginning: how it varied in after-time: And, what I am chiefly to insist on, how it affects us under the Light of the Gospel. These Things with some very few practical Observations

S E R M.  
IV.

S E R M. servations shall be the Sum of my present

IV. Discourse. And first then, *in the beginning*

*it is plain it was not so.* God, in his infinite Wisdom and Power, might, if he had pleased, have created for *Adam* more Wives than *Eve*: but it seemed good to the Almighty Being, tho' he had well considered, that it was not *fit for Man to be alone*, to give him but one *Help*: And she, that they might strictly be one Flesh, was taken out of himself; even while he slept: *As soon as the Man awoke*, and perceived what his Maker had done for him, his innocent Heart, instantly guided by the Light of his Mind, embraced a Tenderneſs for a Being so like himself; and named it Woman, to denote her Original from him, and that she ought to be most strictly united to him. So *Adam* loved *Eve*: she entertained the same Sentiments for him, with utmost Compli-  
ance and Complacency. They lived sole Partners of each others Joys, they *reigned and revelled* in the innocent Enjoyment of domestick Pleasure, in the Bed undefiled, most chaste and pure. No *casual Fruition* could cool Desire, nor stolen Embraces quench their Loves. Oh happy State could they have *learnt to learn no more*.

But such ever was, and ever will be the Fate of forbidden Knowledge, of too great Curiosity. This happy Pair fulfilled to a  
Tittle

Tittle the Expression of the wise Man: *He* SERM.  
*that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow.* IV.

For no sooner were they acquainted that they were naked, but their Love ceased to be perfect; and their Happiness lasted no longer than their Innocence. And so the Bands of Marriage, designed by the Creator to unite the Hearts of those whom he had contracted, has since in the Sequel of Time, and Corruption of Mankind, been a bitter Fountain of Disorders, and Confusions, of *Lamentation and Mourning and Wo.*

And this, in a very swift, but easy Manner, leads me,

Secondly, To shew what Alteration happened in the Bonds of Marriage, in after Times. I have shown you how lived those two Favourites of Heaven in Paradise, where the Seasons were so serene, that they wanted nothing to defend themselves from the Injuries of the Weather: And as the Motions of their Bodies were entirely under the Guidance of their Will, and their Wills in perfect Subjection to that of God's, they had no Occasion for covering themselves, *they were both naked, the Man and his Wife, and were not ashamed.* They could not blush, whilst Innocent of Shame.

If it be now hard for us, to understand this Circumstance of the sacred Story; it is because the greatest Part of our Judgment  
is



S E R M.

IV.

is false and vitiated since the Fall; and because we have equally lost the Notions of true Shame, and those of true Honour. For no sooner were our unhappy Parents driven from Paradise, and *the Earth cursed for their Sake*, but the Elements fell into Disorder, and the Seasons began to vary and be tempestuous; and Man, rebellious, gigantick Man, forsook the Law of his God and run counter to the Laws of Nature. Thus *Cain* killed his Brother; and soon after, *Lamech*, one of *Cain's* accursed Race, was the first that we read of who presumed to break through that divine and sacred Bond of holy Wedlock, instituted by God himself in the Time of Man's Innocency; when one to one could only then be joined, and all the Priest-craft, that could possibly be there, must be that of God alone. But see the Force of bad Example! *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners*. After *Lamech's* bold Violation of the Law of God and Nature, and Fire from Heaven not instantly striking him dead, many Patriarchs and great Men took the same Liberty to themselves. But it was their Sin, and a Blemish in them; and great Inconveniencies followed thereupon. Truth is, it could not be otherwise, but that vast Mischiefs must ensue, upon their having Multiplicity of Wives. For whereas God at first made a Wife to be

an

an Help unto Man, two or three can-  
not but grieve and torment him. Through  
*Hagar's Means*, was *Srrab* stirred against  
*Abraham*, and *Abraham* grieved at *Sarah's*  
Words. Though *Leah* and *Rachael* were  
Sisters, yet great were their Strifes and Emu-  
lations, which must give the wearied Hus-  
band most sensible Pain. And the like is  
recorded of *Peninnah* and *Hannah*, the Mo-  
ther of *Samuel*, the Wives of *Elkanah*, and  
of many others.

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IV.

The only tolerable Reason that ever was  
or can be urged for the Plurality of Wives,  
was the Command of *increase and multiply*.  
Now it was the Mistake of this Command,  
and the unsatiable Desire of multiplying, that  
led the Men of old Time into the Error  
of Polygamy. And, to say Truth, it is the  
best Apology that can be made for it now:  
And yet it is as absurd a way of reasoning  
as can possibly be, and plainly contradict-  
ing the Law of God and Nature. God and  
Nature, in many Things, signify the same:  
But suppose them not to do so here, I have  
already shewn how contrary it is to the  
Divine Institution of Heaven, and then let  
human Law, or Permission say what it will,  
it signifies nothing, unless it could show  
that there were many Women to one Man  
in Nature. But, if it appears quite other-  
wise, then *Polygamy* is against the Law of  
Nature.

SER M. Nature. Now Nature is so far from providing many Women for one Man, that she constantly makes a Produce of more Males than Females. And this all Nations and Languages, all Calculations agree in. And wherever any Bills of Mortality, of coming in and going out of the World, have been kept, it constantly appears that the Number of Males exceed those of Females. And, according to the best Calculation that can, or hath been made, the Males exceed, to about a thirteenth Part. So that after a due Allowance made for the Death of some more Men than Women, and the precarious Lives of Women, the Calculation comes so, that every Woman may have an Husband without the Allowance of *Polygamy*. And then, tho' it may be true, that one Man may multiply upon many Women, yet many Men having every one his own Wife, would do the same; in all Probability more, and in great Certainty, with much more Ease and Satisfaction to themselves and Families; and Honour and Advantage to human Society.

Now if this way of reasoning be true, and the Number of Males is the greatest in Mankind, as Men of Learning allow; why then Nature herself hath put a Bar to *Polygamy*. Besides, in those eastern Countries, where *Polygamy* is allowed, they make great Use



Use of Castration, than which nothing S E R M.  
Nature doth more strongly abhor: And IV.  
yet without it they must be in perpetual  
Flames.

And then the Misery of the Women, the Imprisonment and Slavery they are under, to gratify the insatiable Lust of one poor proud Mortal, is intolerable. And the Children are but a sort of secondary Slaves, and are driven like Sheep, some to be sold, some to the Wars, without Order or Discretion, and those that are retained at home, are generally from the first Woman, who is properly the Wife. And this we may farther learn from the Practice of the *Jews*. So long as the Multiplicity of Wives was indulged amongst them, the first and real Wife was called the Mother of the Family, but the other sort of Wives were called secondary Wives, the *English* translates them not unfitly *Concubines*, for sometimes in the Original the Word signifies infamous Strumpet or common Harlot.

Besides the Difference between these Concubines, and primary Wives are many: As a Disparity in their Authority, or Household Government; the Wife was as Mistress, the Concubine as Handmaid, or Servant; and in all Respects, the Bed excepted, she was inferior. And this appeareth in the Story of *Sarah* and *Hagar*. So likewise the betroth-  
ing

SERM. ing was different: The chief Wife at her  
 IV. Espousals received from her Husband certain  
 Gifts and Tokens; Jewels of Silver and Gold,  
 as Pledges and Ceremonies of the Contract.  
 Further, the chief Wife received from her  
 Husband a Bill of Writing, or Matrimonial  
 Letters; whereas the Concubine received  
 neither such Gifts, nor Letters. So likewise  
 the Children of the chief Wife only suc-  
 ceeded the Father in his Inheritance, the  
 Children of the Concubines received Gifts  
 or Legacies only. *Abraham* gave all his  
 Goods unto *Isaac*, but unto the Sons of  
 the Concubines he gave only some few Le-  
 gacies.

And many of these Customs still remain  
 in the Eastern Countries; and were very  
 much in antient *Greece*; where almost every  
 Town was a sort of separate common  
 Wealth; and if a Philosopher or two lived  
 in it a kind of University: And all of these  
 earnestly contending for their own Laws,  
 and their own Dogma's; so that *Plato* and  
*Aristotle* in their Time had filled that Part  
 of the World with the brutish and absurd  
 Notions, not only of the Multiplicity of  
 Women, but of the Use of all in common.  
 But no sooner did the *Roman* Power take  
 place, and a Race of Men of strict Honour  
 and severe Morals appear in the World;  
 but not only Uncleanneſs in all Shapes, but  
 Polygamy

Polygamy too was forbid by the strictest S E R M.  
Laws. And now putting what hath been IV.  
said together, I hope I have fairly acquitted  
myself of the two first Propositions. 

Which were, first, how the Matter in  
Question stood in the Beginning: And se-  
condly, how it varied in after Time. Come  
we then to the

Third and last Point. But what I am  
chiefly to insist on, is how it affects us un-  
der the Light of the Gospel. And here as  
soon as ever Christianity took Place in the  
World, and was capable of shewing itself  
under any Form of Government, Polygamy  
was presently condemned, as a prophane,  
unhallowed, and sinful thing; and nothing  
less attended its Commission, than Excom-  
munication and often Death itself. To this  
Purpose all History, all Counsels, all Canons,  
all Statutes, all Laws, both Ecclesiastical,  
and Civil, are full. It would be endless and  
out of my Purpose to fill this Paper with  
Instances of boasted Learning. Besides it  
would take up too much of the Time at pre-  
sent allotted us. However I cannot help  
giving you a Taste of the *English* Law in  
this Case.

What did I say? of *English* Law? no  
doubt, the Law of all *Europe*. For the  
Statute, I am going to have regard to, was  
made in the Time of *Henry VIII*, when  
G all



SERM. all the *European* World was in a Flame concerning his Espousals: And all the Universities and learned Men both at home and abroad were consulted upon that great Affair. And just at that Time there comes out an Act of Parliament, as it were the universal Voice of the learned World, Part of which runs thus: "That it should be lawful for all Persons to marry, that were not prohibited by the Law of God, and that no Prohibition or Reservation (God's Law except) should impeach any Marriage." But, says my Lord Chief Justice *Vaughan*, "Still notwithstanding this Law the Marriage of a Man with two Wives, or a Woman with two Husbands is still impeachable," and therefore, in the strictest Sense, contrary to the Law of God: And then after justly Remarks, that "in such a Marriage of one to two, plenary Duty and Benevolence to be paid to each is impossible: And therefore such betrothing is an open Violence and Fraud."

Next to the Laws of the Land, the Statutes and Ordinances of our Kings and Queens, who have, and, God be thanked, still are, to us of this Nation especially, nursing Fathers and nursing Mothers, and under whose Protection the Church of Christ in general hath acquired all the Learning it can yet boast of: Next, I say, to the Powers

that indulge them, let us see what the Divines S E R M. say, what every Church, Sect, or Religion IV. thinks in this Matter. For learned Men, in all Things, in all Religions, are not the same, but here in this Case with one Voice and Consent they cry aloud, Marriage can be but betwixt two, one Man and Woman: For it is impossible, if more than two should be so nearly and firmly joined together as Man and Wife are, every Word, both in the Law and the Gospel, where the thing is mentioned, proveth this Truth. For the Scripture Language is constantly after this Manner: A *Man*, not *Men*, shall cleave to his *Wife*, not to his *Wives*; to *his Wife*, not to *another's Wife*, Two, not more than two can be *one Flesh*, they must be one *Flesh*, not *many Fleashes*.

There is not a Father, no not an obscure School-man, nor from the highest to the lowest Commentator, that does not write after this manner. So therefore, as I have hinted before, Quotations would be endless, so likewise would they be needless. For, to come close to my present Purpose, one serious Thought upon the Chapter out of which my Text is taken, will after what hath been said assuredly fit us right: For tho' it be granted that our Saviour's Discourse with the *Jews* was about Divorce in general, yet it must by Consequence take in *Polygamy* too. For when our Saviour

S E R M. says, that Divorces were contrary to the  
 IV. Equity, and genuine Intention of God's  
 primitive Institution of Matrimony: It follows, that God by *Moses* did, as he did likewise in many other Things, for the Hardness of their Hearts, dispense with his own Institution, in the Case of Divorce; so by Consequence of *Polygamy*; for the one naturally begets the other. But now, under this new Law of Christ's, this Dispensation should no longer obtain, but be abolished, as many other Things were, but our Saviour would have his Disciples act according to the primitive Institution; so that if under the Prohibition of Divorce that of *Polygamy* had not been contained there had been no Room for the Disciples making that Inference, *If the Case of a Man be so with his Wife, it is better not to marry*: Since they might have had a Remedy, by taking one or more Wives, whom they loved better, and been blameless. But to put this Matter quite out of Question; hear our Saviour's own Words. *He that putteth away his Wife and marrieth another committeth Adultery against her.* Now from hence it must certainly follow, that he that having not put her away, and yet marries another must be guilty of the same Crime; that is of Adultery. So then, to put her away, or not to put her away, and to marry another  
 is



is to commit Adultery. Nay, *He that mar-* SERM.  
*rieth her that is put away* is in the same Sin. IV.

Since then a Right to Polygamy, is a Right to marry more Wives than one, it is impossible to have such a Right under the Christian Dispensation by the Law of the Gospel: Because our Saviour himself hath declared such Practice to be Adultery, and therefore unlawful; the highest Abomination to Christians.

And now, I think, after this I need not come down any lower into *St Paul's* Epistle to show you how full to the same Purpose he every where is; and that his Language on this Occasion is constantly singular, *One Wife, the Husband of one Wife, the Wife of one Husband, every Man have his own Wife.* To enlarge upon these Things would still be too tedious and useless; since I hope I have fairly shown what I at first proposed, saving only a practical Observation or two upon the whole. The first of which is, that we would to the best of our Power avoid those Authors and Writings, who in this most corrupt Age under specious Pretences have taken great Pains to make Men easy in their Vices, and to deliver them from the Restraint of Conscience, by undermining all Religion and promoting Atheism and Infidelity. And in order to do this they have generally laid hold of little Circumstances, as if the whole of Christianity depended

SER M. upon Trifles and Sophistry. And to draw the  
 IV, Reader's Attention from the most plain and  
 substantial Arguments, they have constantly  
 dwelt upon, Things quite out of the Case.  
 At other Times they labour to misapply  
 and perplex the plainest Proofs, in order to  
 make way for their own idle Interpretations;  
 and, to advance them the more, they pick out  
 all the weak Arguments of unguarded but  
 otherwise honest Writers, in order to expose  
 the whole to ridicule, and to impose their own  
 vain Fancies upon the unwearied and unlearned  
 Reader: Than which nothing can be more unfair,  
 wicked, or unjust. To avoid which I would farther  
 observe and advise, that we labour, especially  
 when we come into this Place, to have willing  
 Minds to know the Truth. The Flesh indeed  
 is weak and too easily abused; but the Spirit,  
 if not too deeply immersed in Sensuality,  
 is mostly willing to guard our Frailties. And  
 truth is, without a willing Spirit, the strongest  
 Reasoner may not only be deceived by others,  
 but likewise seems determined before-hand  
 to deceive himself. Where there is an Unwillingness  
 to part with the Lusts and Pleasures of this  
 World, there must of Course be a Desire that  
 the Christian Religion, at least those Rules of  
 it, which correct our warm Passions, should  
 not be true, and so make Men willing to  
 favour

favour and embrace any trifling Argument, S E R M.  
against those Things which their indulged IV.  
Passions have led them to like, and so fa-  
tally impose upon themselves.

Hence has arose those many wild and extravagant Notions, which have sent Men a gadding after their own Lusts and Passions; and like the prodigal Son, have ruined many large Fortunes *among Harlots*, and in riotous Living, without doing the least Good in their Generations. No wonder then that good Princes and Governors, well knowing that their Riches and Power consist in the Numbers of their People, (for Hands are not only the Fathers but the Nurseries, as the Earth is the Mother and Womb of Wealth) therefore encourage honest and chaste Marriage, and by so doing prevent Licentiousness, advance their own Honour and Interest, and preserve the Laws of God from Contempt, and Violation. It is therefore a mighty Blessing to Mankind that God in his infinite Wisdom has thought fit to send into the World an Overplus of Males, and so put a natural Bar to *Polygamy*. For else in so vile a State, Women must be most miserable, and however well-disposed they were, it would be impossible for them to live in that Comfort with their Families, in Parity, Love, and Tenderness, with their Husbands, which here they have room, and ought



SERMON. to do in this happy Nation of glorious  
IV. Liberty.

But, in a State of Polygamy, all the sacred Ties of Families would be broken; all the soft Endearments between Husband and Wife, which were designed to sweeten the Toils of Life, would be lost; Wrath, Anger, and Clamour, and a thousand more Mischiefs would take place, were Men at Liberty to satiate their Lusts, under the specious Name of *Polygamy*. This is a Liberty, which, like some more, that the Libertines of the Age thirst after, I hope we shall ever want. But as for our real and substantial Liberties which ought to be as dear to us, and defended equally with our Lives, such as our holy Religion, our Wives and our Children, our Laws and Properties, these by our serving well our God and our King, I pray God may be preserved to us till Time is no more,

SERMON

# SERMON V.

*On the Uncertainty of human Life.*

PSALM XC. 10.

*The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years; yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we flee away.*

THERE is no room to question but that this *Psalms* was wrote by *Moses*; for tho' the whole Book of *Psalms* hath *David's* Title in the Front, yet it is well known that many of them were composed by different Authors. But upon a general Collection of these sacred Hymns, Prayers, and Praises, they have been all inserted among those of *David*; and the Book hath carried his Name. But that *Moses* wrote

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S E R M. wrote this, the very Title of the *Pſalm* doth  
 V. abundantly convince: For it is called a  
 Prayer of *Moses* the Man of God, and it  
 seems to be penned by him towards the  
 Close of his Days, when having governed  
 and lead the People almost forty Years in  
 the Wilderness, and now having brought  
 them near the Borders of *Canaan*: When he  
 looked on, and considered the Multitude, two  
 only excepted, he could not see the Face of a  
 Man that came with him from *Egypt*. So that  
 from his first setting out to his going up to  
 Mount *Nebo* to die there, he must have seen  
 the Death of above six hundred thousand Men.  
 For when the Children of *Israel* took their  
 Leave of Bondage, and journeyed from *Ra-  
 mas*es to *Succoth*, there was about six hun-  
 dred thousand on Foot that were Men, be-  
 side Children. And yet all those died in  
 the Wilderness within the Space of forty  
 Years except *Caleb* and *Joshua*, which two  
 were the only Persons of all that vast num-  
 ber who lived to enter the promised Land.  
 God for their many Rebellions and Provo-  
 cations scattered the rest of their Carcasses  
 in the Wilderness; and not only so, but he  
 shortened the Life of Man, and brought it  
 down to the Standard of seventy or eighty  
 Years at most: and suffered them not to ar-  
 rive at the Age of their Ancestors. Now *Moses*  
 looking back, and seriously pondering these  
 things

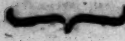


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things, and considering the dismal Destruction of so many hundred thousand Men in so short a Space, is deeply affected with the Sense of God's Anger, and the fatal Consequence; and therefore breaks out into this passionate Complaint. *Thou turnest Man to Destruction, thou carriest them away as with a Flood; they are as a Sheep, they are like Grass that groweth up in the Morning; it flourisheth and is green; in the Evening it is cut down and withereth, for we are consumed by thine Anger, and by thy Wrath we are troubled: thou hast set our Iniquities before thee, and our secret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance, for all our Days are passed away in thy Wrath, we spend our Years as a Tale that is told; and then follows in the Words of the Text, The Days of our Age are threescore Years and ten, and tho' Men be so strong that they come to fourscore Years, yet is their Strength but labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away.* SERM.  
V.

Now from this general Rule every Age hath produced some, tho' very few Exceptions, and there have been found Men who have exceeded the Bounds of fourscore Years, *Caleb* and *Joshua* were more than an hundred, and *Moses* himself was an hundred and twenty, and even then his Eye was not dim, nor his natural Force abated. But even in their Time the Age of Man was much contracted

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SERM. V. tracted from what it had been, and brought within that Compass, which we now generally find it, for usually Men did not live above threescore Years and ten, and it was accounted a long Life if a Man reached to fourscore; and tho' there were then, and are now, some very few and extraordinary Instances of Mens living to an hundred and more, yet this was by no means common then, and we are sure it is not so now. If by Reason of Strength there be some that see fourscore Years, yet is their *Strength Labour and Sorrow*, i. e. if Men by Virtue of a good Constitution and Strength of Nature do extend their Lives beyond the common Bounds, yet even in this there can be no great Satisfaction, since not only the dark Part and latter End of our Lives, but even the Strength of those Years, for so the Words do most evidently import, that the best, the brightest, the strongest, the most shining and vigorous Part of our Time here is but Labour and Sorrow: So that there is no Scene of Life but what is burthenfome, tedious and afflicting, and could we possibly make it otherwise, as we often foolishly flatter ourselves we shall do, yet Life itself is so very short, and runs on to its Period with such unspeakable Swiftneſs, that we have no Time to be at ease here, for *it is soon cut off, and we fly away*. Now the Words thus explained offer to our Considerations these two Things. First,

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First, That the very prime and most S E R M.  
considerable Part of our Life is incumbered V.  
and imbittered with many and sore Evils:   
It is but *Labour and Sorrow*, And se-  
condly, That was it really otherwise, yet  
the Life of Man, is then drawn to the ut-  
most Extent, is so very short, that any En-  
joyment here can signify nothing, so *soon*  
*passeth it away and we are gone.*

I shall make it my present Business first to  
shew these two Things: And then the In-  
fluence such Considerations ought to have  
upon our Practice.

As for the first of these, that the most  
flourishing Part of our Time, our very  
Strength is Sorrow and Trouble, this is a  
most melancholy and flagrant Truth: For  
we cannot open our Eyes, and consider our-  
selves, and all that are around us, but we  
must presently be convinced how miserable  
we all are; for Misery, like Death, makes  
no Distinction, but proudly tramples upon  
all Ranks and Degrees of mortal Men: So  
that those who set on Thorns and wield the  
Scepter, who lye upon Beds of Roses, and  
are crowned with Garlands of Lillies, are as  
little exempt from the common Calamities  
of human Nature, as those who dig in the  
Mines, or labour in the Dunghil. So that  
neither Wisdom, nor Riches, nor Honour,  
nor high Places, nor Youth, nor Strength,  
nor



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S E R M. nor any Thing else that this World can most  
 V. hopefully promise us, can possibly set us  
 out of the Reach of Sorrow, which is our  
 Birth-right, nor secure us from Trouble,  
 to which we are born *as the Sparks fly up-ward.* There is no Age, nor Condition of  
 Man free from this Hereditary Disease, for  
 the very best, the most vigorous, and health-  
 ful, the most active, and pleasurable Parts of  
 of Man's Life, even our very *Strength is but*  
*Labour and Sorrow*, and this no one can  
 be ignorant of, that is not wholly a Stran-  
 ger to himself, and his Neighbours. For  
 let us suppose a Man in the Flower of  
 his Age, when his Veins are full and his  
 Nerves strait; when his Parts are bright, and  
 Beauty blooming: In whom Nature hath  
 shewn her greatest Skill, and Art hath as-  
 sisted to make him compleat, to soften his  
 Manners, and inform his Mind, and polish  
 the ruder Strokes of Nature, when Fortune  
 too shall conspire his Happiness, and make  
 the Creature as great as he can wish, and  
 mount him upon his most flattering Hopes,  
 and administer all earthly Things that may  
 conduce to his Comfort and Satisfaction;  
 and yet after all this, without going any  
 farther, one might appeal to the Man's own  
 self, and if he would deal fairly, he must  
 confess that he is far from Happiness, and  
 that there is something still out of his  
 reach,

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reach, which his restless Mind is craving after; and that he finds many things both from within and without, that daily afflict and give him Trouble. From within, beside the Terrors of Conscience, and the Apprehensions of Futurity, which must sometimes arise in the Breasts of every thinking Man, our natural Corruption too is a vexatious Inmate, which we cannot wholly shake off, and which never ceases to molest and disquiet us; and this alone is enough to make us miserable, tho' there were nothing else to add to our Trouble. Of this St Paul was very sensible, and complains of in this most passionate Expression: *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death.* So violent, so impetuous, so restless, and vexatious is this Corruption in most Men, as not only to keep their own Minds in perpetual Rotation and Disorder, but likewise to discompose the Ease of those that are near him. For it will be difficult to find that Man whose Temper is so even, but some regard must still be had to his private Humour, by all those that are willing to live at Peace with him: And they must often renounce their own Satisfaction to consult his. Nor is that Part of our Life, which we count the sweetest and most desirable, free from the Bondage of this Corruption; for generally when we are strongest, our  
Passions

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V.

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S E R M.

V.



Passions are so too, and they have then the greatest Power to disquiet us, for when we are most healthful, sprightly, and vigorous, then is our Corruption most lively and active: Then are our Lusts most imperious and domineering, and then have we least Power to command, when there is the greatest Occasion to keep them under. What a miserable afflicting Case is this, that a Man must be a Slave and Vassal to his own Follies, and that his Passions shall rule over him, and command his Obedience at Pleasure. And what is yet still worse, it often happens that two different Passions possess the Mind at the same Time, and these hurry the Man two different Ways, with equal Haste. Now than this, what Labour can be more great, or what Care more distracting? And there is no Age of our whole Life more subject to these Convulsions, than that which we are most fond of, and call the Flower of our Time. So that from within, the surest Place to find Happiness, if any be to be found here, yet even from thence in our best Strength, little else is produced but *Labour and Sorrow*. And then, as for outward Troubles, we are equally subject to these also in the Prime of our Age. The outward Afflictions, which human Nature is every Moment subject to, make so vast a Multitude as is not to be numbered,



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numbered, bodily Weaknesses and Infirmities, with a long Train of acute and lingering Diseases, attended with the most grievous Torments and Pains, Loss of Limbs and of Senses, and what is yet more dear, Loss of Liberty by Restraint and Imprisonment, Loss of Friends and Relations, and Estate too; Disappointments in our Designs, Crosses and Discomforts in our Children, Relations and Family, Disgrace and Poverty, and ten times ten thousand other Evils, we are every Moment encompassed with. Nor is any Part of our Lives so happy, as to be out of the Reach and Power of them: For tho' it were possible, as it is by no means probable, for a Man truly to declare himself free from all Sort of Affliction, and that hitherto his Life hath been unacquainted with any Calamity; yet he is not sure to continue so one Day, nor Hour longer: For some sad, and unexpected Providence may take from him an Eye or a Limb; or some unavoidable, unforeseen Accident may deprive him of his Senses, or of his Reason, or of both. And if no such like Thing happen, and be the Man never so great or secure: yet a small Displeasure in his Prince, or neglect in himself will level the greatest Hero, remove the nearest Favourite, and humble the proudest Mortal, and lodge him in the Dungeon at Night,

H

who

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SERMON. who in the Morning was clothed in Scarlet  
V. and fine Linnen, and who fared sumptuously  
every Day. It would be endless, as well as  
most afflicting any longer to reflect on, or  
reckon up the crowding Multitude of pres-  
sing Evils, that human Nature is continually  
subject to, and which no Man, even in his  
best Estate, can promise himself Exemption  
from.

I proceed therefore to shew the second  
Thing proposed, which is that Life itself is  
so very short, that tho' all our Days were  
not filled with Labour and Trouble, yet  
there would be very little Time for Pleasure,  
and Repose. And to shew this, as I must  
not, so I need not be tedious, for not only  
Revelation, but sad Experience acquaints us  
with this melancholy Truth, which I cannot  
demonstrate better, than by those many  
moving Resemblances in Scripture, whereby  
the Shortness of Man's Life is loudly repre-  
sented to us. It is indeed almost impossible  
to conceive how fleeting and transitory we  
are, but yet the holy Pen-men have painted  
human Nature much to the Life, and we  
cannot read them with Attention, but as  
in a Glass see our Similitude. *What is your  
Life?* saith St James, *It is even a Vapour,*  
*that appeareth for a little Time, and then*  
*vanisheth away.* As for Man, his Days are

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*as Grass: As a Flower of the Field be flourisheth, for the Wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the Place thereof shall know it no more. All Flesh is Grass, and all the Goodliness thereof as the Flower of the Field. The Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Surely the People is Grass. We spend our Days as a Tale that is told. Man flees away as a Dream, and we are all as a Sleep: for he hath made our Days as a Hands breadth; our Days are swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle, swifter than a Post. Man is like to Vanity: his Days are a Shadow, that passeth away. And thus throughout the whole Course of the Scripture, and in the Writings of all wise Men, both sacred and prophane, Vanity and a Shadow are the common Representations of human Life. Vanity and a Shadow have such thin and slender Beings, that we know not how to describe them. It is much easier to tell what they are not, than what they are: And yet they are the most proper Figures and Emblems of Life, which while it is in being is upon the very Borders of not being. Life is but a Spot removed from Death, and there is the shortest Distance conceivable between Time and Eternity. And notwithstanding the Bounds from hence to the Grave be so very narrow, that it is*

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V.



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S E R M. often passed at one Stride, yet are we all by  
 V. Nature in great Haste posting on: for tho'  
 nothing be wanting towards the Continuance  
 of Life, and no outward Violence be offered; and a Man live to the utmost Time, even to fourscore Years, yet is it but as a Shadow still, so speedily doth it run out and pass away. Hence *David* compares it to a *Shadow that declineth, the Evening Shadow which hastily extendeth itself and presently it is lost, when the Night draweth nigh and the Day hasteneth to an End.*

And thus our Life is very short when considered apart, and by itself, and when compared, still more so; for many irrational Creatures vastly surpass our Years, and live three Times longer than we. And then for inanimate Beings, it is apparent that some of them are of Substance so solid, as to receive little or no Impression by the longest Time. And of this we are so sensible as to commit to the Marble our own Remembrance, which otherwise would soon be wiped out, not only by our own Death, but by that of our Posterity too.

But our Lives are not only short when compared with other Creatures and Things, but even when compared with our Forefathers. For before the Flood, some of them lived above nine hundred Years. After that, *Noah* and his Race were cut something shorter,

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shorter, and in *Moses* Time they were still SERM.  
declining, and after him few have exceeded V.  
the Limits in the Text, which ever since  
hath been the general Boundary to our  
Lives; which tho' some few have passed,  
yet Millions have never reached. And now  
what a little Span or Thread is this three  
or fourscore Years of ours, when taken out  
of that vast Mass of Time six thousand  
Years, which hath passed since the Crea-  
tion? How short is the Space, how little  
can we know, and how much less can  
we do? And yet more diminutive and shorter  
still we shall appear, if we make one Com-  
parison more, what are we to Eternity?  
The Apostle, when comparing the present  
Life with that which is to come, calls it  
*but a Moment*. And in truth, without look-  
ing back, or considering that boundless Space  
of Time, which is past, and comparing our  
Life with what is only to come, it is shorter,  
if a shorter Space we can conceive than a  
Moment. And therefore the *Psalmist* says,  
*Mine Age is even nothing before thee, for be-  
fore the Mountains were brought forth, or ever  
thou hadst formed the Earth or the World,  
even from everlasting to everlasting thou art  
God. A thousand Years in thy Sight are but  
as yesterday, when it is past, or as a Watch  
in the Night. For thou, O Lord, shalt en-  
dure for ever. For ever is a most astonish-*

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SERMON. ing Expression; Eternity doth at once  
 V. dazzle and confound our Reason, and we  
 cannot possibly form any adequate Ideas  
 concerning it. The longest Time bears not  
 the least Proportion to Eternity, for what  
 is without Beginning, and without End,  
 must be without Measure too.

And now what is this weak, frail, feeble  
 Creature Man, who after three or fourscore  
 Years at most withers and decays, is soon  
 cut off, and his Place knoweth him no  
 more? As soon as our small Quantity of Oil  
 is spent, the Lamp of Life languishes in  
 the Socket: The natural Heat and Moisture  
 is evaporated, the Soul flies upward, and it  
 takes her leave of this Tenement of Clay,  
 and in a short Time the poor corruptible  
 Flesh and Blood moulders away, and re-  
 turns to its Dust. And thus we drop into  
 the Abyss of Eternity: Time and Opportu-  
 nity is swallowed up, and nothing but Light  
 or Darkness remains for us according as  
 we trimmed our Lamps on this Side the  
 Grave.

And this leads me to shew what Influence  
 these Considerations ought to have upon our  
 Practice. First then if the prime, and most  
 considerable Part of our Life be incumbered,  
 and imbittered with many and sore Evils,  
 then let no Man please or sollace himself  
 too much with any Satisfaction, that his  
 best



best Fortunes can either afford, or promise SERM.  
V.  
him. For tho' all Things be calm and  
quiet for the present, yet he knows not  
how soon a Storm may arise, nor from what  
Quarter: For *the Wind bloweth where it list-*  
*eth, and no Man knoweth whence it cometh,*  
*nor whither it goeth.* Neither does he know  
whether his Ruin and Desolation does not  
come flying upon the Wings of that Wind,  
For who knows, but that at his return  
Home, he may receive a Message like that  
of Job's, *Thy Sons and thy Daughters were*  
*eating and drinking Wine in their eldest Bro-*  
*ther's House, and behold there came a great*  
*Wind from the Wilderness, and smote the four*  
*Corners of the House, and it fell upon the*  
*young Men, and they are dead, and I only am*  
*esaped to tell thee.*

When therefore we perceive, that by the  
Intermission of Trouble, carnal Security is  
creeping on, and we begin to flatter our-  
selves with the Continuance of Ease, Quiet,  
Peace, and Prosperity; then let us rouse  
ourselves and take the wise Man's Counsel,  
*Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou*  
*knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*  
Remember the rich Man in the Gospel,  
and consider that thy Soul as well as his,  
may this Day, this Night, this Moment,  
*be required of thee,* and then where are all  
thy promised Hopes, or whose shall all

SERMON. those things be, which thou hast provided?

V.  Such Thoughts as these should teach the most youthful, hail, and vigorous, and those that are most at ease, that even they stand upon slippery Places, and are by no Means out of Danger.

But as for those that are more advanced in Years, whose Feet are treading upon the dark Mountains, and whose Windows are darkened, they must look for nothing but Infirmities, Languishings, and Decays; which every Day, in the most sensible Manner, brings them nearer to their long Home. For the Dregs of Age must by no Means expect to be freed from those Evils, which the Bloom of Youth labours under; nor to enjoy that Repose in Weakness, which even their Strength could not produce. If in our declining Years the Load of our Infirmities be tolerable, and we do not sink under the Burthen, this is a great Mercy, and we ought to look up to God with Thankfulness of Heart, and confess, that he deal-eth very gently and favourably with us. For consider, how many are cut off in the Flower of their Age, and how many more are exercised with severe Trials, or labour under Misfortunes worse than Death: whilst we by a gentle Decay feel nothing but what is common to human Nature, and have leave to go down to our Fathers in Peace.

And

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And thus, as the Consideration of the SERM.  
Misery attending us here doth teach both V.  
old and young, never to think them  
selves secure, on this Side Heaven; so like-  
wise doth it instruct us all, to wean our-  
selves from this World, and make us wil-  
ling to leave it, even when it is best with  
us; and we have the strongest Reason or  
Desire to be here. But if we find none  
of the promised Pleasures, which few Men  
of Sincerity and Experience will say they  
have found, why then do we dote upon  
Life? For was there nothing to imbitter  
and disquiet our Minds, yet so long as  
there is nothing real and substantial to be  
found, nothing but gaudy and glittering  
Trifles, Shadows, Vanities, and Vexation of  
Spirit, how irrationally do we act, when  
such Things we eagerly pursue? But when  
we consider what manifold Sorrows, Crosses  
and Afflictions naturally and inseparably at-  
tend our frail Condition here, what Mad-  
ness is it then to be in Love with such  
Chains and Shackles, and to embrace Con-  
finement, when Liberty is offered? For us  
to go out of this World (I mean to all true  
and good Christian Believers) into the other,  
is no more than to quit our Prison, and be  
set at Liberty; to pass from this *howling*  
*Wilderness into the Land of Promise, to be*  
*delivered*



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SERM. delivered from the Bondage of Corruption,  
V. into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of  
God.

And as welcome as the desired Haven is to the shattered and weary Mariners, after they have been a long Time ruffled and exposed by the merciless Element, so welcome and infinitely more so will Heaven be to the Weather beaten Soul, that hath for some Years been tossed up and down in this tempestuous World, and found no Place to anchor in, till it came to the other. How glad must it then be thus at last to be at rest, and delivered from all Fears, and secured from all Dangers?

And thus much at present we may be content to learn from the first Consideration, that *our Strength is but Labour and Sorrow*. I proceed therefore, in the last Place, to shew how far the second Consideration, which is the Shortness of our Lives, ought to influence our Practice. First then this Consideration should teach us, to possess our Hearts with the most affecting Sense of the Shortness of our Lives, and not content ourselves with some few slight and transient Thoughts concerning it. But we should fix it upon our Spirits, so that it may stay and abide with us, and then there

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there could be no more humbling and useful Consideration in the World, than seriously to reflect, that once in an hundred Years at farthest, the Scene of the whole World is shifted; all the Actors going off the Stage, and others coming in their room; for one Generation passeth away and another cometh.

S E R M.

V.

But this possibly you will say, is no difficult Lesson, and every Body is acquainted with it. It is true, this is an over officious and ingrateful Tale, that is always in our Ears, and we must be acquainted with it whether we will or no. But yet it is a very hard Thing, to get a thorough and abiding Sense of this Matter: It is easy in the general, to give a speculative Assent to it, but to obtain a practical and abiding Sense of it, is most difficult. For our Experience will inform us, that we are marvellously prone to please and solace ourselves, with vain Dreams of long Life, especially if the World favour us, and we enjoy outward Prosperity, then we presently flatter ourselves with the Hopes of long enjoying those earthly Comforts, with which we are surrounded, and lull our Souls with the rich Man's Song; *Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for thee, for many Years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* Where is the

SERM. the Man on whom the World looks friendly,  
 V. ly, that doth not entertain such foolish Dreams  
 as these?

For we may farther observe in ourselves, that we are most unwilling to admit of any serious Thoughts of Death. Nothing is more unwelcome to us, than what puts us in Mind of our Mortality: For naturally we care not how little nor how seldom we hear of Death, and therefore when the Thoughts of Mens Frailty seize on them sometimes, whether they will or no, how do they struggle and labour to be delivered from them, and instead of employing them to a right Use, in the serious Meditation of their latter End, they rather wash them from their Minds, as melancholy and afflicting Thoughts; and therefore stir up themselves to more free and licentious Enjoyment of sensual Pleasures, and say, with the old Epicureans, *Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die.* And if we were to ask the best, and most mortified Men, how it is with them, as touching this Matter; they will tell us, that tho' they look upon it as the most desirable Thing, to have upon their Minds a deep and constant Sense of their Frailty, and that thro' God's Mercy they are sometimes in some Measure sensible of their Mortality; yet they find it is the hardest



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est Thing in the World, to keep their S E R M.  
Minds in that Frame, there is so strong a V.

Propensity in our Nature, to Life, and our treacherous Hearts are so very deceitful, that nothing is more difficult than to perswade ourselves, that we die daily: so that there is great Reason for us, constantly to pray,  
*So teach us, O Lord, to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.*

For there is nothing of greater Importance to us, than such Wisdom and such Knowledge, for the effectual and constant Sense of our Frailty would quicken our Endeavours, and make us provide for Death, and another World. For if we look upon ourselves as dying Men, we cannot, with our Reason about us, launch out into the deep, and enter upon Eternity, before we have discharged our Business here, and made our Peace with our God.

The serious Consideration of Death hastening upon us will, if any thing will do it, awaken our Consciences, and rouse up our drowsy Souls, and make us seriously thoughtful, and solicitous about our eternal Concernment. One great Cause of the deep Slumber, and carnal Security of most Men of the desperate Neglect of the great Salvation, which Christ in the Gospel offers, and of putting off from Day to Day the great Business

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SERM. Business of Religion, is that they put far  
 V. from them the evil Day, and look upon  
 Death as at a great Distance, dreaming of  
 long Life, and many Days here. Now  
 could they be awakened out of this Dream,  
 and be made sensible of their Mortality,  
 could they truly apprehend how small a  
 Distance there is between them and Death,  
 how near they are upon the Confines of  
 it, and that they walk upon the Brink of  
 the Grave every Step they take, then there  
 would be some Hopes that they would  
 shortly begin to make it their Business,  
 to take some Care of their poor Souls:  
 And they would judge nothing in all the  
 World to be of that high Concernment,  
 as to endeavour with all holy Serious-  
 ness to make their Calling and Election  
 sure, before they go hence and be no more  
 seen.

Beside this, he that hath Death in his  
 Eye, and the Sense of his Mortality upon  
 his Heart, who hath these serious Thoughts  
 renewed, and the Impressions of them upon  
 his Soul every Day, will find it a great  
 Guard to him against all Sin, and a Bar to  
 the most powerful Temptations. For a  
 Man possessed of such Thoughts must natu-  
 rally reason thus; I am a frail, weak, dying  
 Creature; my Life hangs upon a small  
 Thread;

*On the Uncertainty of human Life.* III

Thread; my Days are as the Days of an SERM.  
*Hireling, and as the Shadow that declineth;* V.

who knows but this very Day may be my last, all the World cannot give me any good Assurance to the contrary, but that before this Day be ended, my Life may be at an End also, and my Soul summoned to appear before the great God, *the God of the Spirit of all Flesh.* And now how is it possible to conceive any Thing of a greater Influence, to keep us to our Duty, and preserve us from Transgression, than such reasoning as this. Let us bring ourselves to Reason and think thus, and then no Consideration of Honour or Interest, of Profit or Preferment, will ever prevail upon us to wound our Consciences; or do any thing contrary to the Conviction of our Minds. For there is nothing that tends more to make us honest Men and good Christians, than what the Thoughts of Death do naturally suggest to us. For shall we sin knowingly and presumptuously, shall we allow ourselves to yield to any Temptation, or give way to any Corruption, who must die, and go hence, and may appear before our Judge, as soon as we have committed the Crime? For we can not promise ourselves that we shall live one Day, one Hour, or one Minute longer. And therefore we do not act  
2 like



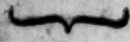
112 *On the Uncertainty of human Life.*

SERM. like reasonable Creatures, but are even as  
V. Beasts before him, when we allow ourselves  
in the Practice of any known Sin; and yet  
profess ourselves to believe, that for every  
Word and Deed we shall be brought to  
Judgment.

And now, how heartily could it be wished that Men would carry such Thoughts as these with them to the Bar, and to the Change, and to all our publick and private Conversation in this World. This would very much alter the Scene of Things, and make us a much more happy Nation and happy People. Men would be convinced, that it is not worth their while to be so cunning, designing, and intreaging here, since in so short a Space we must all be cut off, and flee away. And therefore it is Nonsense for us to wound our Mind, which will be difficult for us ever to cure, in order to obtain some Trifles, not worth our Care: Or if they were, we cannot stay with them.

But last of all, this constant Sense of our Frailty would quicken us to our Duty, and engage us to use our utmost Diligence, to do all the Good we can while we are here. We have a great Deal of Work before us, which is yet undone: For besides what Concerns our own Souls and  
spiritual

*On the Uncertainty of human Life.* II 3

spiritual Estates, we have dear Friends and S E R M.  
Relations, we have those that are near, V.  
as within our own Doors, and we have   
Neighbours and Acquaintance abroad, to  
all which we are Debtors. Our own Con-  
sciences tell us, that we have not fully dis-  
charged our Duty towards any of them,  
and we also find, that tho' we live under  
these Convictions, yet we are very apt to  
procrastinate, and put off from Day to Day  
even those Duties, for the Neglect whereof  
our Hearts do frequently smite us. This  
is a sore Evil, that we should think the  
present Time always the unfittest Season,  
not considering that Time to come is not  
at our Command, nor in our Power.

But certainly it would not be thus with  
us, if the Sense of our Mortality was still  
upon our Spirits. We should then think  
the present Time the only Time that we  
can make sure of, for the Dispatch of the  
Work, which God and our Generation  
expect from us. And we should judge the  
present Opportunities of doing good, which  
Providence hath put into our Hands, the  
only Opportunities that we can count upon.  
For he that really and seriously thinks that  
he may die tomorrow, how should he lay  
about him to dispatch as much of his  
Work, as possibly he can to Day! This

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**SERMON.** is acting like a rational Creature, and quitting himself like a Man. Happy are all those, whom their Lord, when he comes shall find so doing: Which that we may all be, God of his infinite Mercy grant, through Christ, &c.

**SERMON**



## SERMON VI.

*On the Lord's Supper.*

LUKE xxii. 19.

*This do in remembrance of me.*

**A**MONGST all the wonderful Works, SERM.  
VI.  
 God shewed in favour of the Children of *Israel*, and in order to deliver them from the *Egyptian* Bondage, none was more remarkable, than his smiting the First-born in every *Egyptian* House, and passing over those of the Children of *Israel*. And therefore, that the Memory of so remarkable a Mercy might be preserved, and that their Affections might be raised to a strong Sense of God's Goodness, and that their Faith in them might be confirmed, so as in like need to hope for the same favourable Help and Protection, by the due Consideration of such a wonderful Instance of of his Goodness and Mercy; it pleased God

SERM. to appoint a Sacrament or myſterious Rite,  
 VI. to be annually celebrated, repreſenting and  
 and calling to mind that Favour of the Almighty, wherein ſo great a Bleſſing eminently manifeſted itſelf to his People. Now as God, in moſt of the Rites and Ceremonies inſtituted amongſt the *Jews*, did prefigure and typify his gracious Deſign and Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, ſo this of the Paſſover was a moſt plain and evident Sign of that immaculate Lamb without Spot, even his only beloved Son, whom he hath made a Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World: and there we find our bleſſed Saviour take occaſion from the Celebration of this holy Rite, to improve the Inſtitution into a Chriſtian Sacrament, as being moſt agreeable thereto, in repreſenting and commemorating the greateſt Bleſſing that God in his mercy ever could, or at leaſt ever was pleaſed to vouchſafe to us.

And therefore great part of the ancient Sacrifice, or Paſſover (Blood being particularly excepted) is yet retained for us, in the Paſſover. Thus we have ſtill the Benediction and Conſecration, the breaking of the Bread, and handling of the Cup, the Delivery and Diſtribution to the Perſons preſent, and a Declaration at the Delivery; and, laſt of all, the actual partaking of thoſe Symbols by eating the Bread and drinking the Wine, Theſe things

things as we find at the first Institution, so SERM.  
our Saviour hath obliged us to imitate the VI.  
same, saying, *Do this in Remembrance of me.* 

And this is a Duty of eternal Obligation upon us; the ancient Passover indeed was but for a Season, till Christ should come and abolish all bloody Sacrifices: but now *so often as we eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, we do shew forth the Lord's death till he come*; that is, till the time of his second coming, which will not be till the End of the World.

Thus this Sacrament is designed to be a standing Commemoration of the Death and Passion of our Lord and Saviour, till he should come to Judgment; and consequently the Obligation that lies upon Christians to the Observation of it is perpetual, and cannot cease till Christ again returns at the great Day. It is therefore a most indispensable Duty; for our Obedience is commanded by the positive Precept, and solemn Institution, of our blessed Saviour himself, that great Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy. He bids us do this in Remembrance of him.

In speaking to these Words I shall not detain you with any tedious Preface, concerning the *Jewish* Passover, nor amuse you with any boasted Learning, to shew that this our Sacrament was instituted in the room of their paschal Lamb; but only shew, what is the Intent and Design of this Precept, *Do*



SERMON. *this*— And, 2. What Duties do arise to all  
VI. Christians from the same.

And I choose to make this my present Business, *not only because it is proper to this Day, as being the time of our monthly Observation of the Holy Sacrament; but likewise because the next Opportunity in this Place will be an annual Commemoration of our Lord and Master, and the greatest Feast in the Christian Kalender; and at which time, if ever, we will do this in Remembrance of him.*

Besides, at that time it is usual for young People, and for others, who have been so extravagantly foolish, as to defer this most necessary Duty, then to make their first approaches to Christ's holy Table. What therefore follows may be of use to them, to instruct them in the nature of the thing, and the Obligations of their Duty.

First then, the Intent and Design of this Precept, that is, of the Holy Sacrament, is to commemorate and represent to us our Saviour's Death and Passion; to put us in mind, and move our Affections, and create in us suitable Considerations to such astonishing Goodness; and make us reflect, with Hearts and Minds full of Love, on those greivous Pains which he endured, to procure us Pardon and Reconciliation with our God.

The Death and Suffering of our Saviour, which was certainly the highest Act of Goodness,

ness, and Charity, that ever the world yet saw, and which produced Consequences of the highest Advantage, and greatest Importance to us, ought certainly to dispose our Minds and Affections, in some Proportion, to the same Goodness and Charity; and that it may do so, and least we should forget our Redeemer, and in his Absence be wholly estranged from him, he is pleased to order this manner of his being present, and conversing with us, that so we may keep in our Minds his gracious Goodness towards us, and kindle our Souls with a lively Sense of his Mercy, and *so often as we eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, we tell forth his Death, till he return to us again.* SERM.  
VI.

But farther, the great Benefits, which our Saviour's Death and Passion procured for us, if heartily believed, and seriously considered, are hereby lively represented and effectually conveyed to us, and all faithful Souls will as surely be strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine; for it will give Sustenance and Nourishment to our spiritual Life, and will refresh and comfort our drooping Souls: for it is a divine Entertainment, to which God in kindness invites us; and if we come with well disposed Minds, he will not fail to feed us with most holy and exquisite Food, with such heavenly Manna, that he that shall with

S E R M. a strong Hope, and lively Faith, eat our Saviour's Flesh, and drink his Blood, hath eternal  
 VI. Life and shall live for ever. By this Sacrament likewise is declared that Union, which every good Christian enjoys with Christ his Master, and that spiritual Dependence, we have upon him for Life, Mercy, Grace, and Salvation, so that by him our Strength is renewed, and the Decays of our Nature repaired, and this our Saviour himself assures us, when he says, *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abides in me, and I in him.* And St Paul farther adds, *the Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* We, in the outward Action, partake only of the Symbols, Bread and Wine; representing our Saviour's Body and Blood, but virtually and spiritually we communicate of his very Person, and are intimately united to him.

But here be far from us any thing, that should favour of that foolish and absurd Doctrine of Transubstantiation; which, if any thing could be fairly offered in favour of it, would yet still be as useless, as it is at present ridiculous. But yet farther, by this Sacrament is represented and sealed that Union, which is among all true Christians, communicating therein; for by this they are united together, in consent of Mind and Unity of Faith;



Faith: it creates in them a mutual good Will S E R M.  
and Affection, and gives them an Hope and VI.  
Tendency to the same blessed End: it  
makes us a spiritual brotherhood, and holy  
Society. For our Communion with Christ  
most closely ties us one to another, and our  
partaking of this one individual and spiritual  
Food does as it were translate us into one  
Body and Substance: for, says St Paul, *We  
being many are one Bread, one Body, for all  
of us do partake of one Bread.*

Hence then it does appear, that this Sacra-  
ment, this Precept, *do this in remembrance  
of me*, was designed as proper and efficacious  
Means, to raise in us pious Affections to-  
wards our good God, and gracious Re-  
deemer; to dispose us to all holy Practice, to  
confirm our Faith, and nourish our Hope,  
and to quicken our Resolutions of walking  
carefully in the Ways of our Duty; to  
unite us more strongly to our Saviour, and  
to combine us with the fastest Links of  
Charity, one towards another, and to the  
accomplishing of this our faithful and dili-  
gent Concurrence, it is mostly requisite.

And therefore, I shall proceed, in the se-  
cond Place, to shew what Duties do arise to  
us from this command, *Do this in remembrance  
of me*; and these Duties do naturally fall  
under these three Heads; first, What is re-  
quired

SERMON. quired of us before; 2dly, at; and 3dly,  
VI. after doing this.

First then, Before we address ourselves to the Partaking of this most awful Mystery, we should consider whither we are going, and what is the Nature and Importance of the Action we are setting ourselves about; that we are approaching to our Lord's Table, and come into his more especial Presence, to be entertained by him with the greatest Welcome, and highest Repast; that we are going to receive the fullest Testimonies of his Mercy, and the surest Pledges of his Favour towards us; that we are going to behold our Lord, in tenderest Love, offering up himself a Sacrifice to God for us, and undergoing the most bitter Pains and foulest Disgrace, for our Good and Salvation. And therefore we ought to bring with us Dispositions suitable to such an Intercourse, as we are going to make with our gracious Lord. Had we the Honour or Favour to be called to the Table or Presence of our Prince, we should be very careful so to dress and demean ourselves, so to order our Gestures, and to compose our Minds, as not to betray any undue Posture of Soul, nor bring any thing with us that may offend the Eye, or displease the Mind; but be very careful to make ourselves Objects of Desire and Complacency in our Prince. And shall we not take the like Care, when we go into Presence with God and to Communion with Christ

Christ, at whose Presence the Heavens and S E R M.  
the Earth tremble, and the Necks of VI.  
Princes bow low, and their Honour is laid  
in the Dust? Surely we should then prepare  
ourselves, with all our Power, and with all  
our Might; then we should cleanse our Souls  
from all impurity of Thought and Desire,  
from all Iniquity and Perverseness of Mind;  
then we should lay aside all Malice, Envy,  
Hatred, Anger, all Evil-speaking, Whisper-  
ing and Backbiting, and all those evil Dispo-  
sitions, which are so displeasing to God,  
and which his all-peircing Eye will in the  
End discover and reveal, to our eternal Shame  
and Confusion. But we should dress our  
Souls with those comely Ornaments, of Grace,  
and Purity, Humility, Meekness, and Charity,  
and these will render us acceptable and well  
pleasing to God. We should compose our  
Minds into a Frame of Reverence, and aw-  
ful Regard to the divine Majesty; into lowly,  
calm, and tender Dispositions of Heart; such  
as may express all the Respect due to his Pre-  
sence, and be fit to admit the gracious Illapses  
of his holy Spirit.

And, in order to this, we should remove and  
put far from us, not only all vicious Inclina-  
tions, and evil Purposes, but even all worldly  
Cares, Desires, and Passions, that may distract  
or discompose, that may dull or deject us,  
that may cause us to behave ourselves inde-  
cently.



S E R M. cently, or unworthily before God, or to hinder us of any of those excellent Benefits, we are to partake of at this blessed Entertainment.

VI.

But yet a little farther than this, we should, according to St *Paul's* Advice, *examine our selves*, that is, we should consider our past Actions and present Inclinations, and by serious Meditation and fervent Prayer to God, we should work our Souls into an hearty Remorse for our past Miscarriages, and a sincere Resolution to amend for the future: and therefore heartily forsaking, not only the gross Acts of Sin, and Wickedness, but all Appearance of Evil, we should purge out the *old Leaven* of Vice and Folly, and celebrate this Passover with the *unleavened* Disposition of *Sincerity and Truth*. But above all, we must labour to make ourselves Masters of a fervent, and shining Charity: to be not only of a frank and generous, but of a soft and forgiving Temper; to make the best Construction of Men and their Actions, to *suffer long and be kind*, to *envy not*, neither to *vaunt ourselves*, nor *be puffed up*, not be *easily provoked*, nor *seek only our own*, but to *hope all Things*, and *endure all Things*. And if we do not, in some good Measure, arrive to this, all our other Endowments will signify nothing; and we shall be no more than *sounding Brass, and tinkling Cymbals*.

Now

Now such are the Duties that are to go SERM.  
before our Approach to Christ's holy Table, VI.  
proceed we to consider, how we are to de-  
mean ourselves there. Why thither we are  
to bring with us a reverend and devout Affec-  
tion of Heart, and a Behaviour suitable there-  
to; we must bring an awful sense of Mind,  
befitting the Majesty of that Presence, where-  
in we are to appear, and answerable to the  
Greatness, Goodness, and Holiness of him,  
with whom we converse, and such as may  
become the Sacredness of those Mysteries of  
which we are to partake; that so we may *dis-*  
*cern the Lord's Body*, and yield a Reverence  
of Mind, suitable Gestures, agreeable thereto.  
We must possess our Hearts with a sincere  
Contrition for our Sins, which were so great  
as to expose our innocent Redeemer to those  
cruel Pains, which we then remember. And  
this should create in us firm Resolutions, to  
forsake the like for the future, as being highly  
injurious, dishonourable, and displeasing to  
Christ our Master, who laid down his Life for  
us, and the sure Road to ruin and undo our-  
selves. We should therefore possess our Souls  
with the most fervent Love of our blessed Re-  
deemer, and of his wonderful Goodness and  
Charity towards us; and, with the deepest Sense  
of Humility, consider our own unworthiness,  
even to *pick up the crumbs under his table*. And  
this will make us more highly value that won-  
derful

S E R M. derful Condescension, and Goodness of God,  
 VI. which admits us to such an honourable Communion, and Familiarity with him. To this we may add a pious Joy,<sup>1</sup> in Consideration of those noble Privileges imparted to us, and the blessed Fruits we receiv'd thereby. And this will give us a comfortable hope of obtaining and enjoying all the Benefits of his Passion, which will make us not only easy here; but happy hereafter. And this should fix all the Powers of our Souls upon him, and make us enlarge our Minds, and open our Charity towards all our Brethren for his sake, for whose sake we ourselves are thus enlarged, thus entertained, and thus forgiven.

Such are the Duties and Dispositions of Mind we are to bring with us to Christ's holy Table, let us consider in the third Place, how we are to dispose of ourselves afterwards. And certainly, after all these good Motions, pious Resolutions, and heavenly Entertainments, we must not let ourselves loose to our former wicked Courses, and return like the Dog to his Vomit. This would not be only wounding our Souls, but *crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to a new and open Shame*, and making our own Condition worse than before. It is not sufficient therefore, thus far only to proceed, but we must increase, and establish all our pious Inclinations and Affections, and make them appear to be  
 Prin-



Principles within us, by a real Amendment of our Lives and Conversations, and by bringing forth more plentifully those *Fruits* that are meet for *Repentance*. We must therefore now endeavour to maintain a more lively Sense of God's Goodness than before, and cherish those Influences of Grace, which descended upon our Souls in act of Communion, and by degrees we should improve it to a Perfection, as far as possible, in all Piety and Virtue. We should therefore guard our Lives and Conversations with a watchful care so as to keep ourselves from turning either to the Right-hand or to the Left, but straitly pursue those Vows and Resolutions, which in so solemn a Manner we have made to the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. For otherwise, the Violation of such Engagements will strongly aggravate our Guilt, and our Souls, by relapsing into so greivous a Distemper, will lose their spiritual Strength, and be exceedingly impaired: and then of Consequence, our comforts will be abated, our best hopes slacken, and our eternal state will be desperately endangered. But on the other Hand, if we will resolve not to be perfidious, but like honest Men, keep our Vows and Promises; then our Strength will constantly increase, and we shall walk from *Light to Light, till at last it break forth into perfect Day.*

And

SERM.

VI.

And thus we have briefly considered the two Things proposed, the Nature and Design of the holy Sacrament, and the Duties that do arise to us from it. But before we leave this Subject, let us have a little Patience, to consider one thing more, which is of great Weight to this present Purpose: And this is, that we should all gladly embrace every Opportunity of coming to the Sacrament, and regaling our Souls at so divine a Banquet; and this we should do, not only because it is our Duty, but because it is a great Aid and Instrument to all Piety and Virtue in general, and because the neglect of it is a grievous Sin, and what produces the greatest Mischief can befall Mankind.

The primitive Christians did it very frequently, almost at every Meeting for God's Service; and St *Luke* tells us, that *they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Communion, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayer.* And this Practice may well be urged as a great Means of kindling and preserving in them that holy fervour of Piety, which they so illustriously expressed in their Conversation, and in their ready, suffering for Christ's Sake; and the Neglect of this holy Practice may well be reckoned, as one cause of the Degeneracy and Decay of all Christian Piety, and of that Coldness and Slackness, which afterwards seized upon the

Church, and hath even hitherto kept it in a languishing and dying State. The seldomer therefore these Opportunities offer, the readier we should be to embrace them; because it was always esteemed the principal Part of God's Service, and the being debarred of it the highest Misfortune could attend a Christian. If therefore we have any regard for the Honour, or Displeasure of our Lord and Master, or any Tenderness for own Souls; this is a Duty which we must not neglect, for if we eat not his Flesh, and drink not his Blood, we have no Share nor Interest in him.

The Neglect of this Duty hath been, and still is a prevailing fault amongst us, and even amongst some who otherwise might well deserve the Character of good Christians. And this can arise from nothing, but the want of a due Consideration of the thing; for did Men but rightly weigh the Matter, all those frivolous Excuses of Absence would immediately be scattered like the dust before the Wind. If we plead that we are otherwise engaged, and that the Business and Cares of this World have taken up our Affections, this is most unreasonable, because there can be no Business of greater Importance to us, than serving of God and saving our Souls; for *what can a Man be profited, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul.* It is  
K the

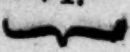
SERM.

VI.



SER M. the greatest Wisdom therefore to pursue, first,  
 VI. the greatest Affair, and to *seek first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness.* We must not plead, that we are unworthy to come into God's Presence, because it is our own Fault if we are so. But then this should not keep us from obeying God's Commands, nor begging his Mercy, nor returning our Gratitude to our Redeemer. Because we are unworthy, must we continue so still, and shun the very Means of our Cure? It is a very wrong Method of curing our Unworthiness, by the Omission of our Duty. Our Unworthiness should rather drive us to our Duty, as to the *Waters of Jordan*, where we may *wash and be clean.* We should all indeed think of ourselves as most unworthy: must we all therefore refrain from our Duty? No certainly, if we have a Sense of our Sins, and a Resolution to leave them, if we have grateful Thoughts of Christ's Goodness to us, and a thankful Remembrance of his Death, though we are unworthy, yet he hath promised that we shall be kindly received, and graciously rewarded. And if we will not take a little Care to work these Dispositions in ourselves, we are indeed most unworthy. But our being so will be no Excuse for the Neglect of our Duty.

But then the Danger of receiving unworthily is still a Weight upon Mens Minds,  
 and

and what they cannot get over: and indeed, S E R M.  
I am afraid, that they do not well consider VI.  
what they do, who deter others from the   
Sacrament with such loud Anathemas, upon  
the Pretence that they are not fit for it.  
This has made some Men, who before were  
under some Reserve, give a loose to all  
Licentiousness; and in some Places the very  
Institution seems almost to be forgotten: so  
that here is the highest injury done to Re-  
ligion, and that by an Argument that hath  
not the least force. For though the Danger  
of unworthy receiving be avoided by Absence,  
yet the danger of neglecting and omitting  
our Duty is not thereby avoided: and there-  
fore they in the Parable, who refused their  
Attendance at the Marriage-Feast, were  
equally guilty with him who came without  
a wedding Garment. And as one was punish-  
ed for disrespect; so the others were de-  
stroyed for their Disobedience. Nay, of  
the two, it is the greater sign of Contempt,  
wholly to Neglect, than to partake, though  
not duly qualified. The greatest Hinderance,  
or Unworthiness is to be a bad Man, and  
he is as bad, and more likely to con-  
tinue so, who wholly neglects, as he  
who comes with some Reverence and Pre-  
paration, though not so much as he ought.  
It is true, the Danger of unworthy receiving  
is great, but the proper Use we are to make

SERM. of this is not to deter Men from their Duty,  
 VI. but from their Sins: and therefore when  
 the Apostle told the *Corinthians*, *That they*  
*who eat and drank unworthily were guilty of*  
*the Body and Blood of Christ*. He does not  
 bid them forbear coming, but bids them  
*examine themselves*, that is amend their Lives,  
 and so make their Profession and their  
 Practice consistent things. Upon the whole,

I dare say, that he, who with an honest  
 Heart, though imperfect Devotion, doth  
 approach this Holy Table, is far more ex-  
 cusable than he, who, upon any pretence,  
 declines his Obedience. For no scruple can  
 ward us from blame, much less can any  
 supine Sloth, or profane Contempt excuse  
 the Neglect of our Duty.

But here let no vile Miscreant take Um-  
 brage, and by his occasional Conformity,  
 think to trifle with God, though he may  
 deceive Men. For the Practice, which is  
 too common, of coming to the Holy Sacra-  
 ment only by way of Qualification, and  
 the better carrying on our worldly Interests  
 and Designs, is such an horrid abuse of  
 these Holy Mysteries, as would make even  
 a Pagan tremble. What Punishment there-  
 fore is due to Christians, who can thus  
 dare, not only to *crucify*, but almost in a  
 literal Sense, *trample under foot the Son of*  
*God,*



*On the Lord's Supper.*

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God, cannot be thought of without Terror, SERM.  
nor mentioned without Astonishment. VI.

Let us therefore secure, to ourselves, at least, an honest and sincere Heart, and have a willing Spirit; and then, though the Flesh be weak, we may with reason hope that God will accept of our sincere, though frail Performance; and that he may do so, in every Part of our Duty, we have all just reason to pray, through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ our only Saviour and Redeemer.



1953

*On the Excellency of Musick.*

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A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED at

S A L I S B U R Y,

O N

St CÆCILIA's-Day.



## S E R M O N VII.

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*On the Excellency of Musick.*

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I SAM. xvi. 23.

*And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand : so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.*

SERM.  
VII.

**I** Question not, my Brethren, but the very naming these Words hath already raised in you some Expectation : I mean it has raised your Curiosity, and you have already put on a pleasing Impatience, in thinking what Deductions I shall make from the Subject before us. It is indeed but too true, that to satisfy Curiosity doth crowd not only this Place, but most of our Christian Assemblies. It is either curious Eyes,  
or

or itching Ears, that at present lead most S E R M.  
of the Professors of Christianity, even to VII.  
the form of their Duty. The true Spirit  
of Devotion, and the real honour of God,  
are in a vast Declension amongst us. But  
however it is reasonable to be hoped, that  
many of those, who in the Beginning came  
to Church to satisfy only their Eyes and  
their Ears, may in the Issue come to satisfy  
their Consciences too; and so convert their  
Curiosity into Sincerity, and by degrees be  
truly convinced of the Beauty of Holiness.  
And therefore those Men are to be had in  
great honour, who so adorn the House of  
God, that Men cannot pass by, but their  
own Eyes invite them to go in; and who  
prepare such heavenly repast, that when  
they are in, their own Ears com-  
mand their stay. And yet I know Men  
are too apt to fall out with the Enter-  
tainment, and in this Age of wonderful  
Reformation, Men have learnt to be so very  
calm in Devotion, that if they are not  
well apprised, the Sound of an *Organ*  
may give them vast Disturbance. To pre-  
vent which, and by reason of this noble  
Largess here before us, I have chosen at this  
time to repeat unto you from the Prophet  
*Samuel*, from the Word of God, this  
wonderful Instance of the Force of Musick:  
*And it came to pass, when the evil Spirit*  
*from*

SERM. from God was upon Saul; that David took  
 VII. an Harp and played with his Hand: so

 Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil Spirit departed from him. In speaking to which Words I shall not lead you into any Dispute, whether the Influence David's Harp had upon Saul proceeded from a natural or divine Cause; but taking the Matter of Fact just as it stands, I shall make it my present Business, to shew you the Excellency of Musick, and to draw such Inferences from it, as may be fit to be practised by the Christian Professors and Encouragers of such pleasing, and, if rightly used, such a divine Art.

First then, as for the Excellency of the Music; that chiefly consists in these three things: 1st, In its Antiquity. 2dly, In its Reputation, which it hath always had in the World, And 3dly, In the Force and Influence it hath upon human Nature.

Now as for the Antiquity of Musick, which is the first degree of its Excellency; we find it to reach beyond the Flood: for Jubal, Noah's Brother, is said to be the Father, or first Teacher of those, who handle the Harp and the Organ. And although this, like most other Arts, might suffer greatly by the Flood, and considering the State and Condition that Mankind was then in, it was not likely that it should  
 soon



soon be revived. For after that great Destruction of Mankind, God contracted the Life of Man, and imposed upon him a greater Necessity to labour, than was needful before; so that after the Flood, Men had neither time nor leisure to find out or improve those Arts, which had so lately perished with their Authors. But yet we find it was not long before Musick was restored: the Floods were not able to conceal that; but it swam above Water, and discovered itself again. And of this we may be assured, by the Song of *Moses*, and the Timbrel of *Miriam*. And *Job* likewise, whose Antiquity is agreed to be very high, tells us, that in his time Men did use *the Timbrel and Harp, and rejoice in the sound of the Organ*. And he speaks of this as no new thing, but as if it had been the practice of the World long before.

And if we trace to the utmost Limits of holy Writ, we find Musick there: and the same Satisfaction we shall have in our Enquiry, if we seek after it in the History of the Heathens: the Ancients of which give us but a very dark Account of any thing before the *Trojan War*; but yet in those earlier Ages, which were long before, we find that Musick was much practised among them. And though the History of those Times seems almost buried in Oblivion,

SERM.  
VII.

SERM. livion, yet Musick does still shine through  
 VII. that dark Cloud, that is between us and  
 them; for *Linus* and *Amphion*, *Orpheus* and  
*Chiron*, who all lived long before the *Trojan*  
 War, are represented to us as famous  
 Musicians in their time. And thus, tho'  
 the Actions of Heroes are forgotten, and  
 Fame herself is silent thro' the distance of  
 time and place, yet the Musick even of  
 those Days strikes our Ears, and does not  
 perish like other things.

And if we look into the History of those  
 Times, which are a little nearer to us;  
 concerning which we have a more per-  
 fect Account; there we shall find that no-  
 thing was more in practice than Musick:  
 for there is scarce any Author, that we  
 now account Valuable or Ancient, but  
 what speaks something of this Art:  
 and, what is very observable, they always  
 paint with their utmost Skill, when they  
 try to give a Discription of it. Thus it  
 is plain, that Musick is no new thing, hatched  
 by vain and idle Fancies; but it is a thing  
 that hath been practised and embraced by  
 Mankind, as one the greatest Satisfactions  
 of human Life, ever since Men began to  
 multiply upon the Face of the Earth.

And this naturally leads me to the second  
 degree of its Excellency, which is the Re-  
 putation it hath always had in the World.

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And

And this likewise will appear to be very great; for if we look back into former Ages, and consider the Practice of old Times, we shall find that no Art or Science whatsoever was more in vogue, among the most ingenious Men, than Musick. The ancient *Grecians*, who according to all Accounts were the most polished and refined Nation of the World, had a peculiar Value and esteem for this Art: insomuch that they thought it a Part of good Breeding to be skilled this way, so that if a Man, tho' great in other things, happened to be defective in this Accomplishment, and not able to perform his Part at a Consort, they presently called his Education in Question. And though some may from hence imagine, that this was only the Practice of soft and effeminate Men, yet we shall find that it was not thought unfit to be practised by those of the greatest Minds. For certainly *Homer* had too much Skill, to describe any thing that was mean in his Heroes: and yet doubts not to tell you, that the bravest of them, even *Achilles*, himself, had a very good hand upon the Lute. So that amongst the *Grecians*, that civilized Nation, we see that Musick was used in the best Company, and was the Entertainment of People of the highest Rank.

SERM.  
VII.

But



SERM.

VII.

But if this Account does not satisfy us, and we are apt to think that the *Grecians* were near of Temper to a Neighbouring Nation of ours, who are remarkable for their Softness and Effeminacy, and who naturally love those things which are light and vain; then let us look into the Practice of the ancient *Romans*, and see how Musick prevailed among them. And if we find its Reputation to be as good there, then we have no reason to doubt, but that it was practised by Men, who were not only great, but very grave and serious too. Now the *Romans* were so far from not valuing this Art, that in all their Theatres, and Places of publick Show, many of the Professors of it were employed in them, and there was no Solemnity whatever performed without Musick, in their most pompous and magnificent Triumphs. Musick still bore a Part, and it was that which gave the Life and Pleasure to the Performance. And to satisfy us that this Art was not used only by mean and contemptible Men, we find it practised even by the *Cæsars* themselves. And *Nero*, that Monster of Mankind, had been yet more so, had not his Nature been somewhat sweetened by that small Knowledge he had in Musick: And this might be enough to satisfy us, how great hath been its Reputation in all Ages; but

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to

to give it its due Character, let us consider SERM.  
what part it hath born in religious Worship; VII.  
and that will still more convince us of the  
Esteem that it hath always been in.

As for the heathen, or natural Religion, nothing bore a greater Part in that, than Musick. For their Worship consisted much in Singing, and loud Acclamation, in the Praise of the Deity; and few of their Sacrifices were offered up, without great Performances this way. And such was the Esteem that some of the wisest of the Heathens had for Musick, that they imagined it to be the Entertainment of the *Elysian* Fields; which Place they believed to be the Receptacle of the Souls of good Men, after their Departure out of this World.

And then, in the *Jewish* Religion, which was directed immediately by God himself, we see that Musick was practised very much there likewise; and according to the Account the Scripture gives us of the Musick in the Temple, so exquisite were their Performances, that we may reasonably imagine the old *Jerusalem* to be a lively Representation of the New; not only for its Beauty, but its Harmony likewise. Give me leave to repeat to you one of the most awful Descriptions of it, that Words can possibly comprehend, you will find it in the the 8th Chapter of 2d Book of *Chronicles* at the  
12th

SERM. 12th Verse, where you will read after this

VII.

*arrayed in white Linnen, having Cymbals and Psalteries and Harps, stood at the East End of the Altar, and with them an hundred and twenty Priests sounding with Trumpets: and it came to pass, as the Trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound, to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; that when they lift up their Voice with the Trumpets and Cymbals, and Instruments of Musick, and praised the Lord, saying, for he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever, that then the House was filled with a Cloud, even the House of the Lord, so that the Priests could not stand to minister by reason of the Cloud, for the Glory of the Lord had filled the House of God. What a surprising Account is this; God Almighty himself descends, in the Pillar of a Cloud, that he might in Person shew to the Sons of Men, what delight he had in such Performances.*

And to satisfy us, that Musick, like other Rites and Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Law, was not to be abolished; but left at Liberty to Christian Practice, St Paul in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, advising Christians, as a very decent and comely thing, to sing *Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs; singing and making Melody in their Hearts to the Lord.* And to justify this Practice farther,



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VII.

farther, St *John* in his Revelations hath told us, that the Saints above are continually employed, in the unwearied and pleasing Repetitions of *Holy, holy, holy*. And surely, the nearer we follow their Example, the more pleasing we must be to God; and therefore it is directed as one of our daily Petitions, *that his Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

*David* we know was a Man after God's own Heart, and we imagine this as one great Reason why he was so, because he much resembled the Blessed above, in having a more than ordinary Genius in Music and Harmony. And he always practised that on Earth, which is the Business of of those in Heaven, *viz.* to sing Praises and Thanksgivings to their Maker. And now, I hope, this is sufficient to satisfy any reasonable Man, of the Reputation of Music; and to justify the Use that is made of it in this Place. And therefore I think it needless to say any thing more, to please the vain Curiosity of those, who are not only Enemies to Music but to all sort of Harmony in our Church; I mean to all the Order and Decency of our Christian Worship.

And this brings me to the third and last Degree of Excellency, and that is the Influence it hath upon human Nature. And

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this

SERM. this indeed is very strange and unaccount-  
VII. ble: the power of Sounds seems to have  
somewhat of a divine Nature in it, being  
able to divide itself without lessening, and  
to communicate its Influence, to great Num-  
bers at one time. For one single Note will  
cut itself into a thousand Rivulets, and be  
enjoyed by as many Ears at the same In-  
stant; and yet flow as full to every one,  
as if it had but one Channel to feed.  
Thus the manner how Sounds are conveyed  
to our Senses is very wonderful; but yet  
the Force and Influence of them, when  
they come there, is still more strange;  
for there is scarce any Man, whose Con-  
stitution is so heavy, or whose pretended  
Reason is so strong, as not to be moved  
by the Harmony of Sounds. For Musick,  
if it be brisk and lively, will strangely  
awaken the Mind, and infuse unexpected  
Vigour, and make the Spirits, which be-  
fore seemed to sleep, to act with a more  
sprightly Motion. And so, on the other  
hand, there is surely no Constitution, how  
brisk or lively soever, though the Blood  
boil in the Veins, and the Spirits be all  
on fire; yet Musick, if it be grave and  
serious, will abate the Storm, and quench  
the Flames of the most unruly Passion.  
For who can hear dying Sobs gestured  
from a mournful Instrument, and not  
himself

himself fetch a *diapason* Groan; or what S E R M.  
 strange Temper must that Man be of, VII.  
 whose Devotion is not influenced by an  
 heavenly Anthem? How Musick comes to  
 have so great an Advantage upon the  
 Minds of Men, I can think of no other  
 Reason but this, which is, that its Com-  
 posure being so near to that of our Souls,  
 which are Ethereal and Harmonious, our  
 Minds cannot but delight in that, which  
 is so much like themselves. How far  
 such Reasoning may take place, I know  
 not; but sure I am, that Musick hath a  
 very near Passage to our Souls, and can  
 in an Instant arrest all our Passions, and  
 lull them asleep; and the very next Mo-  
 ment can give them the utmost hurry and  
 disorder. But not only the Passions of  
 Men have been raised to the greatest Height  
 and Violence, and then as suddenly appeased  
 by the Force of Musick; but even the  
 Devil himself hath been forced to yield  
 to the same Charm; for *when David took  
 an Harp and played with his Hand, Saul  
 was refreshed and was well, and the Evil  
 Spirit departed from him.* And this brings  
 me in the last place to make an Inference  
 or two proper for our Christian Practice.  
 And first if Musick be so ancient, and  
 at the same time so lovely and becoming,  
 then let it not decline amongst us. We



SERMON. pretend to live in a learned and refined  
VIII. Age, and our Notices of Things to run  
high; so that the World cannot complain  
that they are imposed upon. And Truth  
is, that if Musick in itself, I mean when  
practised in this place, was evil, then in-  
deed neither its Antiquity, nor any thing  
else could plead in its behalf. But so long  
as it tends rather to increase, than disin-  
courage Goodness, we ought to im-  
prove it. It is true, that there is nothing  
so sure, nothing that we practise here  
upon Earth so refined, but what is capable  
of Corruption, and may be used to base  
and mean Ends. And no doubt but Musick  
hath been much abused this way: but  
from hence it doth not follow, that it  
should be wholly laid aside, for then, by  
the same reason, all Vertue might be cast  
off. That therefore which we are to im-  
prove, is the noble and divine Part of  
Musick; which will enliven our Minds  
and warm our Devotion. It is the Opinion  
of learned Men, that this Part of Musick,  
like our Religion, is very much declined,  
and doth not come up to that of the  
Ancients. And I wish I could not say  
the same of our Piety too: not that I  
would have any Man think Religion to  
be a thing of so indifferent a Nature, as  
to depend upon the Rise or Fall of har-  
monious

monious Sounds: but it is most certain SERM.  
VII.  
that such an Art tends much to assist, and help, and give life to Devotion. And therefore some have been bold to say, that the Declension of Musick, like a dark and silent Night, hath laid the power of many Souls so fast asleep, that nothing but an Hand or Harp like *David's* can rouse them from their lethargick Drowsiness. It would therefore be a great Benefit to Mankind could we retrieve this noble Art, and bring it to its ancient and primitive Perfection. Melancholy would then be cured at a cheaper Rate; and that evil Spirit would not so commonly possess Mankind.

But farther, if the Reputation of Musick hath always been so great in the World, and with just reason, then let us endeavour to maintain and keep it up: and there is nothing that will tend more to this, than the good Lives and Conversations of those who either encourage or profess it. For if the Lovers of Musick be Men of Ingenuity and good Temper, and if their Conversations be free from the base Corruptions that prevail in the World, this would be a convincing Argument to sensible Men, that there was something extraordinary in the Art, which did thus sweeten the Minds, and correct the Passions of the Professors

SERM. of it. So that if we consult our own Reputation, or the Reputation of the Art we pretend so much to love, then we must *live soberly righteously and godly*, and such Practice will secure our own Interest and the Interest of our Profession. And without such Practice, all other Endowments, all other Performances will have no Influence upon others, nor will they be of any Signification to ourselves. Add to this one thing more, which, if duly observed, would much increase and maintain the Reputation of Musick, and that is to free it from those horrid Abuses, which Men of corrupt Minds have put upon it; for Musick hath been made so common, and hath been so prostituted to loose and wanton Inclinations, that it hath given such offence to some, as to make them angry with all Musick in general. But although this be a very unreasonable way of arguing; to be offended at a thing, because it hath been abused; yet could we take away this foolish prejudice, which rules in the Hearts of too many, by confining our Musick wholly to the Church, or at least to those things which are chaste and sober, then our Choirs would be oftner filled, and Men would more delight in the Sound of the Organ.

Give



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SERM.

VII.

Give me leave to make one Observation more, which is, that if Musick hath so great an Influence upon human Nature, then all those, who are the Masters of it, or its Professors, ought to take great care how they manage this noble Art; for without such caution great Mischief and Disorder often hath, and may arise. For if Musick can command the Passions of Men, and rule them almost with an absolute Sway; then it must be in the Power of those that are skilled, or of those that command them, to do much good or very much harm. It is a Duty therefore, highly incumbent upon them, to take care not to provoke Men into evil: for then they not only prove Snares to others, but likewise bring great Mischief upon themselves, by making the Sins of other Men in great measure become their own. He therefore, that would profit both himself and his Neighbour, must bear a part in no Musick, but what is composed in manly and religious, or at least in chaste and sober, Strains. And this would be of great use to Mankind, by awakening their Minds and refreshing their Thoughts with those things, that are pleasing and delightful, and at the same time innocent and heavenly too. And this rule ought most religiously, and in a peculiar Manner,

SERM. to be observed by all those, that bear any

VII. Part in Church Musick. For in that there ought to be nothing that is vain and trifling, that may please a light Fancy, or move an undecent Thought. Religious Harmony should be pleasing, but yet grave; it should be so composed, as to warm our Devotion, and to take hold of the smallest Fibres of our Hearts. It should give us a foretast of the Joys above, and make us ambitious of the heavenly Mansions. And thus our Souls being tuned on Earth, will at last become fit for the Musick of Heaven. O happy and glorious Place! And most happy they that shall be thought worthy of it! Look up, O my Soul, and wonder at what is to come, ravish thy self with Admiration of that glorious Entertainment in the heavenly Kingdom! Look up thither, and comfort thy self under all the Uncertainties and Disappointments of Life! Turn thine Eyes that way and put behind thee all sinful Pleasure! Despise and deride the unsincere, the gilded hypocritical Treatments of the lower World, and trample upon all the Glories of it, and reach after and hasten to the other! But whilst we are here let us be chearful, let us *sing merrily unto God our Strength, and make a chearful Noise unto the God Jacob*; let us take the Psalm  
with

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*with the Tabret, the merry Harp and the* SERM.  
*Lute, and let us praise the Lord God of* VII.  
*Israel from everlasting to everlasting and*  
*let all the People say AMEN.*



SER-



# SERMON VIII.

*On the Fifth of November.*

ECCLES. V. 8.

*If thou seest the Oppression of the Poor, and violent perverting of Judgment and Justice in a Province; marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest, regardeth; and there is higher than they.*

SERM. VIII. **I**T is certain, that no greater Iniquity can possess a People, then to distrust God and his Providence; and to have too great a Regard to second Causes, and to put all our Confidence in Man; and yet (to our great Shame) there is nothing more common, nor prevailing amongst us, than this abominable Vice; for if we give ourselves leave to reflect upon the common Conversation of Mankind, we shall be ready to think, that  
a Divine

a Divine Infatuation hath possess'd the People; and that most of them are become such Fools, as to *say in their Heart, there is no God*; or if they do condescend to allow, that possibly there may be a Being superior to themselves; yet, with the old *Epicureans*, they think that he doth not meddle with human Affairs. The Numbers, indeed, of those are but few, who dare openly avow and profess such Principles as these; but if any Judgment of Mens Minds is to be made by their Actions, or by their general Conduct or Course of their Conversation, one with another, then we shall rarely find any Company, where the Majority is not inclined to put their Trust in Man, rather than in God. Else, what is the meaning of the general Distrust and Murmur, that, at present, possesses the People; and what makes Men so fond and eager in the pursuit of Party and Faction, but that they foolishly imagine, that there can be no Safety, but in the Hands of their own Creatures: and thus each side equally neglect Providence, and never consider, that *it is God that setteth up one, and pulleth down the other.*

If Men would rightly, and like Christians, consider this, most of our Disputes, concerning Politicks, would be immediately at an end, and when things happened well, we should give the Glory unto God; and when they

SER M.  
VIII.

SER.M. they happen otherwise, we should humble  
 VIII. ourselves under his Correction; still con-  
 sidering, that no good can come to us,  
 but what he designs shall do so; nor no  
 evil can happen, but what he permits, as  
 our Punishment and fatherly Correction,  
 and that in order to do us good.

If therefore we should see *the Oppression of the Poor, and violent perverting of Justice and Judgment in a Province*, things which far from us may God ever avert, and which at present (God be praised) under so gracious and gentle a Sovereign, we have no reason to fear, but supposing even the worst, and as we have most certainly deserved it should be unto us, yet even then the Wise Man adviseth us *not to marvel at the Matter*, not to amuse ourselves and others with vain and foolish Fears; and so by our own false Alarms, widen our Breaches, and advance our Misery; *for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they; for God, who is most high, regardeth; and his Hand ruleth over all his Works*: our Eyes therefore should be unto him, and all our hopes, and all our Fears should center there; and we should *put no trust in Princes, nor in any Child of Man, for verily there is no help in them.*

From



From the Words thus explained, I shall make it my present Business to persuade my self and others, wholly to abandon, if it be possible, this foolish and prevailing Vice that is among us, *viz.* of amusing ourselves with News and Politicks, and too warmly espousing of Parties, and laying out Schemes for our Superiors. But, 2dly, That we should rather employ our time in considering the Providence of God, and in bringing our Minds to place our Dependance upon him.

SERM.  
VIII.

And this I shall do with the greatest Impartiality possibly I can, without favouring the one Side, or reflecting on the other.

As to the first, That we should cease to move the Waters, methinks we should be prevailed upon to do so, for these three Reasons, 1st, Because by it we can do no good: 2dly, That from it will issue a great deal of Mischief; and, 3dly, It will lead us to distrust Providence, and grow full of ourselves; than which a greater Misfortune cannot attend a People.

First then, We can do no good by our Disputes: I know that there are a great many things on each Side pretended to justify this unwarrantable Zeal: on one Side *Liberty and Property* is thought worthy of Defence; and on the other Side the *Danger of the Church* moves their Care; but

SERM. but if *Liberty* and *Property* had no better  
VIII. Defence than what arose from such vain  
Babbling, we should soon be in Confusion,  
and lose the very Things we so warmly  
contend for, and pursue; and our boasted  
*Liberty* would be the very occasion of our  
Thralldom: so, on the other Hand, if the  
*Church* had no better Friends than those  
who are most loud, and impertinent in her  
Behalf, she would *really be in danger*. One  
Party are afraid of *Popery*, and the other  
are defending themselves against *Presbytery*:  
they are both, indeed, dangerous Rocks,  
and it would be equally fatal to touch up-  
on either: But so long as we have so good  
a Pilot at the Helm, and the Heavens yet  
fair and indulgent, there is no reason to  
fear either; unless we ourselves conjure up  
a Storm. On one Hand *Resistance* is thought  
not only lawful but necessary; and on the  
other, *absolute Obedience* is taught to be  
our Duty. This is a Doctrine that never  
failed to please at Courts, and the other  
is as sure to gratify the People: but as all  
Christian Men should be very careful how  
they encourage the People to resist, and be  
tumultuous, human Nature being too apt to  
take fire, and run into Confusion, so no  
Body should *sew Pillows to any Arm-boles*,  
or indulge the Vanity or Passions, even  
of their Sovereign. Such Questions as  
these

these therefore are much better determined SERM?  
by publick Authority, than made the VIII.  
Topicks of our Discourse, especially at a   
Time, when they serve only to inflame:  
and certainly whilst *one is thus of Paul,*  
*and another of Apollos, we must be carnal;*  
and therefore, were Men really sincere,  
which I am afraid rarely happens; nay,  
were they absolutely in the right too, which  
is yet more rare, yet these Disputes will do  
no good, or scarce ever convince: For Men  
do not treat of them, as if they were wil-  
ling to be better informed, but rather to  
learn how to trapan and catch one ano-  
ther.

There is a little eager Ambition possessing  
these Zealots, which, after all their Pre-  
tence, hath not the least Regard to the pub-  
lick Good; but only who shall be thought  
the deepest Man, or the clearest Dispu-  
tant. And thus our Passions are more en-  
gaged than our Reason, and from hence cer-  
tainly can arise no good: it will not correct  
the State, nor amend our Superiors, nor  
make ourselves one jot the better, or the  
wiser Men.

2dly, But, on the contrary, from hence  
will naturally arise abundance of Mischiefs:  
one of which is so gross and notorious,  
and doth so impose upon the Understand-  
ings of all inferior Politicians, that, was  
the



**SERMON.** the Thing once rightly understood, and  
**VIII.** considered, it would certainly make Men  
 ashamed of themselves, put them upon  
 right Reasoning, and prove its own cure.  
 And there is no Secret in this Matter nei-  
 ther; for every Body knows, that in all  
 States and Kingdoms, there is ever to be  
 found a Set of Men, who make it their  
 Business to amuse the Multitude, whilst  
 they aggrandize themselves: and there is  
 no Court so pure, but that some of these  
 may be found, and their Practice as easily  
 seen; for the common Method of proceed-  
 ing is by giving odd and ridiculous Names  
 to Men and Things; and so dividing the  
 Populacy, and creating a Faction; for it is  
 certain, that there is no Fish to be caught,  
 whilst the Waters are clear; and therefore  
 the People must be moved and disturbed:  
 and in order to do so, he is a most pro-  
 per Engine that can prate briskly amongst  
 his Neighbours, that can rail loudly within  
 the Verge of the Law, traduce Power, and  
 our Superiors; and by a cunning side-glance,  
 dart even at Majesty itself, when it does  
 not come up to our Measures, or run all  
 the Lengths that we are willing to have  
 it.

In a Word, All these Common-dealers  
 in Politicks, who frequent publick Places,  
 to talk warmly of what least regards them,  
 and

and to dispute most learnedly of what they S E R M.  
are most ignorant of, all these Under-dis- VIII.  
pensers are only Tools in the Hands of  
those few Master-Workmen, who are at  
the same time making a Market of the whole,  
and will no more spare their Factors, than  
they will those that are at quiet in the  
Land.

And now if a Man would seriously consider this, can any thing be more ridiculous, than that Men of any common Understanding should be prevailed upon, to set their own and their Neighbours Houses on Fire, for no other Reason than that those cunning Sophisters, who gave us the Brand, may at the same time run away with the Spoil. Such verily is our case, and such it will be, till we cease to dispute, and learn to think: till we forbear being busy Bodies in other Mens matters, but become Keepers at home, and rarely meddle but with our own Business.

Another great Mischief that may arise from hence (Mischief did I say) yea Ruin and Desolation, and all things that are evil, flow from this bitter Fountain: Divide and Rule is a Maxim that cannot be practised upon us at home; but highly to our Shame and Disadvantage, as is evident by the fore-going Instance, but if this Trick should be played us from abroad too, the Consequence must be fatal. Let us lay

M

our

SERMON. our Hands upon our Hearts, and consider  
 VIII. what Ruin and Misery we bring upon our  
 selves, and what a Curse we entail upon  
 our Posterity, if we, by our own Folly  
 make the Breach so wide, as to give room  
 for the common Enemy to enter in; or at  
 least, to give such a Shock, as may move  
 our Constitution from off the Hinges, on  
 which now, it most happily turns.

For however some Men may foolishly  
 flatter themselves, that it is against one Power  
 only we need to guard, let them be assured,  
 that as we have the best Establishment in  
 the World, so we can make no Change, but  
 for the worse. Each Party therefore that  
 declines either to the Right-hand or to the  
 Left, and are willing to introduce any  
 Scenes more than what the Law hath  
 prescribed, ought equally to be contemned  
 and avoided by us.

If Papacy should prevail, I need not re-  
 late the Misery that must be the Conse-  
 quence; and if any Storm should come  
 from the North, there are left yet living  
 Witnesses, who felt the Hurricanes of the  
 late Times: and I doubt not, but even here  
 are Branches of many Families who still  
 smart with the Remembrance of it. And  
 why will we then lay our selves open to  
 such Convulsions as these? And not much  
 rather unite and join in *things that belong to*  
 2 our



our Peace, be kindly affectionated one towards SERM.  
another; always remembering, how joyful VIII.  
and pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell   
together in Unity.

3dly, And that we may do so, I have one Reason more left to urge, which is, left we are led to distrust Providence, than which a greater Curse cannot attend a People: and nothing hath a greater Tendency to this than the Politick Reasoning, and idle Sophistry that so much prevails amongst us; for when Men grow opinionated of themselves, and fond of their own Conceptions, then all Events are presently made to square to their Projections, and thus and thus, (says the vain Man) I knew it would happen: and thus God is presently shuffled out of the Case. And let the Action be never so great; little, very little, Glory is given unto him, tho' all, and more than we can give, is his due.

It is really very surprizing sometimes, to hear with what an Air of Assurance Men will talk of the greatest Affairs; how invincible their Armies must be, and how unerring their Counsels; never considering, that *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, nor Bread to the Wise, nor Favour to Men of Skill; but Time and Chance happens to all.* Providence and the over-ruling Power hath certainly the Guidance of all Things here below: but when

SERMON. Men grow full of themselves, all this is forgotten: they can dream of no Power but in the Arm of Flesh, and of no Safety, but in the Hands of Men: and those too must be of their own chusing, for we see Men unwilling to trust God, even so far: notwithstanding it is *He only that maketh rich, and maketh Poor: it is he that humbleth, and he that exalteth, he pulleth down, and he setteth up:* and this he will do, let the People be never so unquiet. But now our Unquietness, and Distrust of God's Providence, may at last provoke him to leave us, and forsake us: to give us up unto our own Heart's Lust, to give us up into the Hands of our Enemies: so that *they that hate us, may be Lord's over us: so that the Oppression of the Poor, and violent perverting of Judgment and Justice,* may be openly seen in our Streets. This is what hath happened to many Nations, and *Jerusalem* (which possibly the wise Man in the Text may chiefly regard) was the most dreadful Example of it, that ever the World yet saw: and as they were the most factious People upon Earth, so that Faction made them the most miserable: if the same thing should happen to us, we are not, we need not, to *marvel at the matter; for God, who is higher than the highest, regardeth;* and will not let a wicked

a wicked People go unpunished: but, in order to prevent any Evil from befalling us, how happy might we be, could we, in the last place, be prevailed upon, to employ those leisure Hours, which lie so heavy upon our Hands, that we are forced to barter them away in wrangling! to employ them in considering the Providence of God, and in bringing our Minds to place our Dependance upon him. But before I speak of our necessary and absolute Dependence upon God, it will not be amiss, first, To shew what sort of human Means are lawful and requisite for us to make use of; for, certainly, our honest Endeavours to concur with God's Providence, is absolutely necessary: for we must, by no means, expect, that God should be always working Miracles for us, and think that *the Barrel of Meal shall not waste, nor the Cruise of Oil fail; or that the Ravens shall bring us Bread and Flesh in the Morning, and Bread and Flesh in the Evening,* and we neglect the ordinary Means of supporting our selves; for if a Man *will not labour, neither should he eat.* But even here our Politicians are generally mistaken, and are apt to put too much Confidence in human Wisdom; for verily, there is no such mighty Difference in the Wits and Contrivance of Men; no such great Advantage in Military Power and



SERM. Conduct; no such wonderful Disproportion  
VIII. in Courage, or Wisdom, or Education of Men;  
for when God hath been pleased to let loose  
the most rude and barbarous Nations, and  
unexperienced in Matters of War, upon  
the most flourishing Kingdoms, and the  
most disciplined Armies, and most fortified  
Cities, they have, in spite of all Opposi-  
tion, over-run and destroyed them all.

And of this, the *Roman* Empire is a  
most famous Example; for even at the  
time, when she was the Mistress of the  
World, and her People in every Sense the  
most polished and refined, the *Goths*, *Van-*  
*dals*, and *Huns*, a rude and barbarous Peo-  
ple, broke in upon them; and in a few  
Years ruined that mighty Empire, that  
cost so much Labour, so much Time,  
and such vast expence of Blood to raise:  
and when the gravest and the wisest of  
the *Romans* looked back, and considered  
this, then they could own the mighty  
Hand of Providence, and confess, that no  
human Power, without a divine Assistance,  
could possibly do this; so suddenly bring  
to nought so strong and well-contrived a  
State. May we never have cause for any  
such Reflections; and, in order to prevent  
it, let us heartily resolve to be careful;  
and every Man sincerely endeavour honestly  
to discharge his Duty in that State of  
Life,

Life, in which it hath pleased God to place him. Let the great and the rich, those that are to govern, cease from Oppression, and use Justice and Judgment; and these Virtues would keep them from yielding to the Temptations of any thing that is base or mean: it would give them a Bravery of Spirit, and be a Prop and a Stay to their Minds; and not suffer them to sink in the Deluge of a corrupted Age: it will hinder them from being guilty of any Action beneath themselves, or running Counter to the Conviction of their Conscience: So that no Post, no trust, no profit, no honour shall lead them into any thing mis-becoming Men; and, what is so common, make them change their Opinion with their Place: if therefore our Governors desire Peace within their Walls, and Prosperity within their Palaces; if, for their Brethren and Companions sake, they will now say, *Peace be within thee: or if because of the House of the Lord our God, they will seek to do us any Good*, why, then the Path is before them, namely to act with Justice and Judgment, and do things consistent with Honour and Conscience. And for us, who are to obey, let us act with a Christian Prudence and Temperance; and these Virtues will keep us from being over-hasty in our Words and Actions, and

SERM.  
VIII.

SERM. make us weigh and consider things well,  
 VIII. before we run in with a Party, or be guilty, of any thing that is reflecting upon our Superiors, without absolute Necessity.

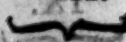
These Virtues will keep us within our due Bounds, and teach us to conquer our Lusts and Passions, and make us moderate in the Enjoyment of earthly Pleasures: they will put a Stop to the craving Appetites of Mankind, and check their unbounded desire to Domination and Rule. These things, if we would heartily follow with a tender Affection one for another, jointly contriving each other's Good, with a firm Desire to support the Honour and the Interest of the Nation; these are the best Measures, humanely speaking, that we are capable of, to defend our selves. And when we have so done, then let us look up to that just and powerful Being that is above; *who ruleth the raging of the Sea, and the madness of the People; who telleth the number of the Stars, and calleth them all by their Names; and who feedeth the young Ravens, when they cry unto him.* And as this is the most reasonable, so is it the safest Method we can possibly take: for *though there be many Devices in a Man's Heart, yet the Counsel of the Lord that only shall stand;* and in order to convince our selves of this, we should often seriously reflect on  
 the



the Works of Providence, look back and S E R M.  
consider with our selves; and I question VIII.  
not, but that we shall find even by the  
working of our Minds, when calmly and  
coolly examined, how naturally depending  
all things, even our poor proud selves, are  
upon God. I do not say we shall be able  
to trace all the windings of Providence; for  
God's Ways are above our Ways, and his  
Paths, by us poor Mortals, past finding  
out: but thus much we shall immediately  
discover, that we our selves are a Mass of  
Vanity, and disorderly frail Creatures;  
whose Passions are strong, and Reason weak:  
whose Senses are treacherous and fallacious,  
the Scenes of Error and Mistake; and  
whose Judgment is weak, very weak  
in most things, and short-sighted in all:  
That our Bodies are finite and mortal,  
the Center of Infirmary and Disease; and  
must soon, very soon, dissolve into Ashes,  
and pass into the Land of Darkness and  
Silence; where all things are forgotten:  
and that our most noble part, even our  
Soul, whilst it is here imprisoned in Flesh  
and Blood, is so byassed and clouded with  
its Corruption, as to be capable of doing  
very little; not so much as to think a  
good Thought, without a divine Assistance.  
And now what can such a poor, frail, fi-  
nite Being as this more reasonably do,  
than

SERM. than to depend upon that infinite and Supreme Power, that Author of himself and all things; who can Measure the Earth with a Span, and stop the Bottles of Heaven: He well knows, and is well acquainted with all the different Movements of our Minds, and can trace the most subtil Fibres of our Hearts, and understandeth all our Thoughts long before. What Non-sense is it therefore to trifle with God? Or to be cunning, only to deceive our selves? and how much more rationally should we act, to cast all our Care upon him, who, we know, careth for us? But this is not only the most rational, but the wisest and safest thing we can do.

*Trust not in Man, nor in any Child of Man, for there is no help in them; but trust in God, and there our Confidence is sure: then we shall lay our Foundations upon a Rock, so that no stress of Weather, no Storms can injure us: Then let the Oppression of the poor be evident, and a violent perverting Justice and Judgment appear bare-faced, yet we need not be startled, nor marvel at the matter; for God, who is higher than highest, will regard us; and in his own good time deliver us from all our Fears: and that he may do so, let us shake off all Sloth and Security, and rouse our selves from our Golden Dreams:*

Dreams: let us root out every secret Seed S E R M.  
of Infidelity in our Hearts, and learn to VIII.  
have the same respect for God in private,   
which we are, in some measure, obliged  
to shew to him in publick: and then that  
great and good Father, which heareth us  
*in Secret, will not fail to reward us open-*  
*ly.*

And of this there cannot possibly be a  
greater Instance, than what we at pre-  
sent commemorate; for never did any hu-  
man Device so exquisitely twine itself in  
all the dark Labyrinths of Wickedness as  
at this time; when we read and consider  
the Story well, we cannot help thinking,  
but the Contrivers of this great and astonish-  
ing Mischief must have more than ordinary  
Assistance from the mighty Powers of Dark-  
ness: For the Plot seems to be laid and  
contrived in one of the secret Chambers  
of the bottomless Pit; and yet how easily,  
how suddenly, and how naturally too,  
when the Matter came just to be ripe,  
and fit for Execution, did God bring to  
nought this wondrous Work of Darkness!  
He sate on high, looked down, and  
smiled at the Attempts of all infernal  
Power, pitied the Folly of Mankind; and  
in this wonderful Example shewed us, how  
easily we are to be trapped in the works  
of our own Hands; and that no Flesh  
living



S E R M. living might justify itself, or claim any  
 IX. Honour in this Discovery: it was wrought  
 after that surprizing Manner, which is yet  
 (and is likely ever to be) a Secret and a  
 Wonder to Mankind; and from this most  
 instructive Lesson we should learn not only to  
 shun, and mark such Brethren, who walk  
 thus disorderly, not only to ward against and  
 shew our Contempt and Dis-esteem to such  
 vile and horrid Principles, as could counte-  
 nance and carry on such Projections as these;  
 but likewise to lift up our Hearts unto  
 God, and place all our Confidence there,  
 to *Praise the Lord for his Goodness, and*  
*declare the Wonders that he doth for the*  
*Children of Men;* to consider our own  
 Littleness and Nothingness, and God's Al-  
 mighty Power, and that all things are  
 in his Hands, and that he disposeth of  
 them at Pleasure, which that we may  
 all do, God of his infinite Mercy grant,  
 thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.

S E R-

## SERMON IX.

On TIME.

EPH. V. 15, 16.

*See then that ye walk circumspectly  
not as fools but as wise.  
Redeeming the time because the days  
are evil.*

THESE Words are most curious and SERM.  
IX.  
excellent in their Matter, and represent to us one of the most profitable Lessons we can possibly learn; to *redeem Time*: which at first view looks like something impossible. But yet he tells us that if we will be like the wise and not the foolish Virgins, and *walk circumspectly*, and tho' *the Days* are very *evil*; yet still we may *redeem the time*. But how is this possible? For Time is in a continual Flux, perpetual

SERM. tual Motion, and every Moment that is  
 IX. not improved must surely be lost. Thus  
 our best Learning, Nature, and Reason presently conclude. But what these, and all the other Powers in the World acting in Conjunction cannot do, the poorest Christian (by God's Grace assisting) is taught to do: to *redeem Time*.

Could I, my Brethren, inform the unfortunate Mariner, how to *redeem* his lost Vessel from the close Embraces of the unsatiable Deep, and so repair his Loss with the small remainder of his Fortune, how pleased would he hearken to, and follow my Advice? Could I show the Captive how to recover his Liberty, and the Conquered his Honour, the Base and Scandalous their Reputation, and the Malefactor his Life, what crowding would there be in this Place, with what Patience would Men hear, and with what Diligence would they practise? And now, in Truth, this is what I come to offer you; and what the Apostle in the Words of the Text earnestly exhorts you to. And is there then really need of Exhortation to a thing, in whose behalf self-Interest pleads so strong? One would think that there needed no pains to win Attention to such Proposals.

But



But since it is too plain, that most Men S E R M.  
 know not the true Price of Time, nor how to IX.  
 spend it when they have it, nor how to }  
 redeem it when mis-spent; I shall therefore,  
 in the Progress of this Discourse, show  
 you, First, The true value of Time: and  
 2dly, The great abuse of it: and 3dly, The  
 most excellent Manner and Duty chiefly  
 recommended in the Text, of *redeeming* it:  
*Redeem the Time because the Days are*  
*evil.*

The Iniquity of the Times hath been  
 an old Complaint, almost as old as Time  
 itself; and the grand Reason of this Complaint  
 is nothing else, but the mis-spending of our  
 Time. We dedicate that to *Vice*, which  
 we ought to consecrate to Virtue. And in  
 such Practice we make a vast Accumulation  
 of evil; not only by the Commission of  
 evil, but by the Omission of doing good:  
 and so heap up Wrath against the Day of  
 Wrath,

And thus, after this manner our blessed  
 Saviour himself seems to sum up that most  
 tremendous Charge, which is to be passed  
 in the last great and mighty Day, saying,  
 you did not feed me, you did not cloath  
 me, you did not visit me: therefore because  
 you did not, for such ungrateful Omission,  
 and loitering away your Time, *Go ye*  
*curled into everlasting fire.* And now, my  
Brethren,

SERM. Brethren, notwithstanding this dreadful Sentence, and our firm Persuasion and Profession of the Truth of it; and dreadful will it be for us if we lose our Time; yet still this is very little considered by the Generality of Mankind. The Managery of our Time is a most nice and curious thing, and which, if not well husbanded, we must be undone; and therefore we cannot, with any compassion, look around us; but with Tears consider the vast Profusion and Abuse of Time that is made, almost by all Men. It is amazing to consider what labour and pains Men take in the Pursuits of Amusements and Divertisements, in order to pass away their Time. Children are not more eager, but much more innocent in their Pleasures.

But whilst thus I am speaking, it may not be improper to question what TIME is. Some call it the Revolution of the Heavens, or the Measure of their Motion; others a Particle of Eternity. Now these and such like are Amusements of the Philosophers. But there is a more awful and true Definition of it, which every Christian carries in his own Breast; which is, that it is a *Season assigned us by Providence, for every Man to work out his own Salvation with fear and trembling.* Now if this be a true Account of Time, then surely nothing can be

be more precious. What Frenzy then hath seized Mankind, and makes them so lavish of what (if they will but think) they must esteem so dear? What foul Spirit makes us so fond and careful of temporal Advantages? So greedy of what is not our own, and so negligent of the only thing that most properly belongs to us? For all other things are foreign; nothing but Time in a strict and Christian Sense can be ours. But supposing other things to be never so much our own, yet still they are beneath us: and tho' a wise Man may sometimes descend to them, in order to relieve the Necessities of this World, or for the relaxing his Mind: yet still he will remember that the Management of Time is the chief Business of Man *for this only is his own, and yet even this will not stay with us.* It is short and swift, qualities that inhanse the Value, and demonstrate that it was given us for present use. And tho' this be most true, yet we may observe, that so slippery is Time; that part of it steals away from us, before we reflect on it: part others; steal from us; and of that which we are actually using, a great deal of it runs to waste. For in the Weakness of our Childhood, Reason takes little or no Place: and in the Hurry of our Youth, we rarely think right: and in weary old Age, we cannot apply as we would:



SERM. so that the Middle of our Years, to which  
IX. thousands never arrive, tho' that be the most  
convenient Season for *redeeming our Time*, yet  
sure it is that thousands never think of doing  
so, but postpone it to a later Season; in which  
very probably they will have no share;  
and if they have, will yet still be more  
unfit for Labour: for in our riper and  
more digested Years, besides the Weakness  
and Frailty of our Nature, consider we  
how much Time must be consumed in  
rest and repast, and in refreshing the Spirits  
and unbending the Mind: how much is  
wasted by Men of any Thought in curious,  
though simple Enquiries, and benighted  
Error, and so mistaking our Business in  
fond Expectations, vain Hopes, and distract-  
ing Fears. And after all this our Passions  
and Appetites, the way of the World and  
those we converse with, will put in for  
and demand another share of our Time;  
and still we find plenty enough to spare,  
and we suffer every one that is willing  
to lose his own Time to make bold with  
ours; and, as if the Wickedness of the Day  
was not sufficient for itself, we often take  
in great part of the Night too, sometimes in  
Intemperance, at best in formal Visits and  
unprofitable Talk; too often in Slander and  
Detraction, and when the Scene closes it is  
generally

generally with an Invitation to *spend* another Hour, as they foolishly call it, as soon as they can, the same Way. To *spend* an Hour! Do we know what we say! possibly to trifle away that very Hour, with which the great and the good God hath indulged us to obtain Pardon, and to purchase Glory. To *spend* our Time! Most absurd Expression! It argues the Stupidity of our Thoughts, to quicken the *speed* of Time, which is ever upon the Wing and with all our Learning and Art, we cannot persuade one Moment's stay. We never dream into how narrow Compass our Lives are crowded, and how suddenly we may be snatched away amidst all our pleasures and all our Hopes.

But, my Brethren, for the Love of Mercy, with all the Bowels of Compassion, I beseech you, let us once in our Lives be serious, and consider in cold Blood what we are doing, and whilst there is so great a Treasure sliding from us, let us for once seriously consider what we are driving at, and what we hope to gain by so prodigious and irrecoverable an Expence. Consider that all Time, not spent in order to Eternity, is mispent; and, if employed in Things indifferent, it is to be accounted for; and if in Things criminal, it is to be satisfied for. If we do not

SERM. now just now, redeem it, and even those

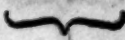
IX. Actions, which we account most innocent, if not directed to a right End, certainly become defective, and, in some measure, Criminal; nay even Things necessary, when they are too eagerly pursued, and beyond their due Bounds, will be deemed an Abuse. I need not speak of Time spent in vile Abominations and Revels, those Things which even the Corruption of the Age cannot colour nor protect; and which will appear in their own Blackness do what we can, and will condemn us even in the acting; such as sauntering all Day from place to place, hearing and relating News; picking up Tales and Stories, Slanders, and sometimes Treason, and then spending the Night in Riot, unlawful Gaming, vilest Lewdness, all Abominations, even our want of Knowledge will not excuse this, for where there is a Power of knowing, Ignorance itself shall be reputed a Crime; and he who does not know, who might have known, in the last great Day of Account, shall be known and punished with many Stripes.

It was a common saying with some of the heathen Moralists, before the Light of the Gospel took Place, that every Man was the Maker of his own Fortunes. I am sure that every Christian may be the  
the



## On T I M E.

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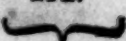
Maker of his own Happiness, who by S E R M.  
co-operating with the Grace of God, and IX.  
well using the time that is given him,   
may improve the most ordinary Actions  
into virtuous; and by neglecting this easy  
Improvement may render himself account-  
able for the most indifferent Things.

That Direction of the Apostle, whether  
you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do  
all to the Glory of God, is a Precept of  
vast Extent, and reaches not only to the  
more remarkable, but also takes in the most  
minute Actions at every moment of our  
Lives in the Eyes of God. A thousand  
Years are but a Moment, and in the Ser-  
vice of God, a Moment may be worth a  
thousand Years. It may begin the re-  
demption of a Man's lost Time, and so  
purchase his Happiness, eternal Happiness.  
Who would not then eagerly embrace  
every flying Moment, which attends him  
only in order to so great a Good?

And now, after what hath been said,  
I cannot but hope, that we are all duly  
persuaded of the great value of Time;  
and that no Man that hath given any  
Attendance, or that thinks at all, but must  
be inwardly and seriously grieved, that he  
hath parted with his own at any easy or  
foolish rate: and therefore will be very  
glad

SERM. glad to hear, how he may *redeem* it; Re-  
VIII. *deem the Time.*

— This is the second Thing I propos'd, but how can we do this? The highest Point of Wisdom that Men by the Light of Nature could discover, was to make use of their Time, when it was in their Hands. But to recover it when it is gone; to retrieve it when lost; to rectify the Errors and Miscarriages of it when it is no more; this God reserv'd as an *Arcanum* of his own: and never gave it Light, but thro' Christ who hath revealed it unto Babes. He has shewn to the poorest and meanest Christian, how to redeem his Time: the Rule is plain and easy: only *walk circumspectly, not as Fools but as Wise, and you shall redeem your Time.* Do now, what before you ought to have done, and guard your Actions for the future, and so you shall repair the Damages caused by your former Negligences: but by *walking circumspectly* is implied not only a Cessation from evil, but also a Repentance of it; an Abhorrence for the future. To *redeem Time* therefore, is to redeem the Offences of a mispent Life, with serious Repentance, for what is past, and pious Obedience for the future. And will Amendment for the future cross the Book; and an humble Acknowledgment of our Debt compound

compound with the Adversary in the Way? S E R M.  
 Will a present Diligence in performing our IX.  
 Duty atone for all past Neglect; and the   
 Mismanagement of our Talent? And can  
 this be thought too dear a Purchase?  
 For shame let us rouse our drowsy Souls,  
 and since the Mercy of God is so liberal,  
 let us chearfully enter the Vineyard, tho'  
 at the eleventh Hour. For since the Re-  
 mainder of our Time will make up the  
 Loss of all the rest, what Stupidity is it  
 now to be idle, this is a promise, a Par-  
 don that transcends not only all reasonable  
 Hope, but even our boldest Presumption.

Surely there is some unknown Pleasure,  
 some invincible Fascination in Idleness: if  
 such powerful Charms as these cannot un-  
 tie the Knot, surely that Creature must be  
 very deeply immersed in Flesh and Blood,  
 who can think that to do nothing is easy,  
 when indeed it is the greatest Pain the  
 reasonable Creature can endure; for the  
 condition of such an one must be a childish  
 Weakness, so that he cannot act, or a shame-  
 ful Ignorance, that he knows not what to  
 do. And then every Man of Reason will  
 grant me, that as Ignorance is a Punishment  
 upon us for our Neglect, and not im-  
 proving our Faculties, so likewise is it the  
 greatest Torment of the Soul, which na-  
 turally thirsts after Knowledge and is ne-



SERM. ver to be satisfied without the Enjoyment  
 IX. of its proper Object; and this is confirmed by the most unthinking and grosser Part of Mankind, of whom if you enquire they will tell you that their greatest Pain is from their Weakness, and their greatest Trouble their want of Knowledge: so that the common Consent of human Nature bears Testimony against us, and shows that *what we call a genteel* or an idle Life, speaks either our Weakness or our Ignorance. The idle Liver therefore is the most unhappy Creature in the World, for Happiness is so far from consisting in either of these, that they are no more to be reconciled than Light and Darkness.

In a Word therefore, whosoever Promises himself Happiness without Labour, sets it, if I may so express my self, at too dear a Rate, and at which a reasonable Man would hardly be willing to buy it. For if it be not to be purchased, without living idly, a Man must first become miserable, in order to become happy. There is not a Man amongst us, who would not think it a sad Judgment, to have neither Hands nor Feet: yet such is every Man's Misery; who, tho' he may have all the Beauties and Endowments of Nature, doth not make use of them to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind. And tho' he may  
 eat,

eat, drink, and be merry, yet I defy the S E R M.  
strongest Reasoner to show in what his IX.  
Happiness doth consist: unless he will place   
it in the Indolence of a Brute, and so  
rob him of his Reason. But if he will  
keep that distinguishing Character of Man,  
he will find that he was *born to Trouble*,  
and to Labour too, *as the Sparks fly upward*.  
And therefore to be a Man, to be a Chri-  
stian and religious Man, and to be idle, looks  
like a Contradiction. I am sure it will  
end in worse *Lamentation, and Mourning,*  
*and Woe*. And if such be the Case then,  
alas for ourselves! For such is the present  
State of this Age and Nation: for I this  
Day appeal unto you, my Brethren, if  
God should once again, as he did to the  
*Jews*, send the Prophet *Jeremiab*, to search  
and enquire out a just and sober Man, any  
one who seeketh the Truth, I am afraid  
he would bring in the same Evidence he  
did before; *thou hast stricken them but they*  
*have not grieved, thou hast consumed them,*  
*but they have refused to bear Correction,* they  
have made their Faces harder *than a Rock,*  
*they have refused to return*. The more  
Time thou givest them to repent, the more  
Time thou allowest them to sin, and they are  
so far from redeeming what is past, that there  
is like to be no end of the Score; and if  
this Disease was only amongst the Popu-  
lacy

SERM. lacy, such who perhaps are poor and  
IX. foolish, and ignorant of the Ways of our  
Lord, and the Judgments and Law of  
their God, then the Malady might not  
be so fatal, but the nearer View we make,  
we discover that the whole Head is sick  
and the Heart faint; that all sorts of  
Men have *altogether broken the Yoke, and  
burst the Bonds.* The Men of Fortune,  
at their very first looking into the World,  
and writing Man, their first Business, is to  
forget, as far as they can, the religious  
Education of their tender Years, and to  
efface the Instructions of their Parents and  
Masters, by doing every thing that they  
were before forbid. The first Tincture  
they see is Vanity, and that soon swells  
into Pride, and then they think themselves  
born as free and lawless, as the wild Ass's  
Colt in the Desert: and so their Business  
lies only where their Pleasures do. And  
now what a strange Notion of Happiness  
have these Men, who place themselves in  
a State of corrupt and abandoned nature,  
endowed only with a Liberty to sin or  
rather in a State of Damnation, by put-  
ting it out of their Power to do well.

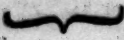
But I hope better Things of you, my  
Brethren, though thus I speak. You surely  
have learnt Christ Jesus much better than  
to think that God hath made a Law, from  
which



which he exempts that part of Mankind, SERM.  
which is most able and best qualified to IX.  
perform it; or that he has singled out the  
best Part of his Creation, to spend their  
Time in Silence and Idleness. No sure,  
the Advantage of an *easy* Condition consists  
in a Capacity of serving God and our  
Neighbour, in a more excellent manner,  
as having more Leisure, Plenty, and Power,  
by which means your Time becomes more  
valuable, because it may be more beneficial,  
and is the more easy redeemed by the  
many Expedients that are before you. *And*  
*therefore* the Abuse of it is more enorm-  
ous and chargeable with the the greatest  
Guilt.

But certainly if the Man of Business has  
not Time to be devout, yet he has Time,  
but it seems not to that End, or if to  
that End, yet Affairs of greater Import-  
ance intervene and challenge it to them-  
selves. If it be so, the Man of Business  
is by necessity the most irreligious Person  
in the World: If a Man prefers any thing  
to his Duty to God, or his Prayers, it is plain  
that he judges what he prefers to be of the  
greater Importance, and this is nothing less  
than spiritual Idolatry, preferring the Creature  
to the Creator. But if you acknowledge  
those things you prefer to your Prayers to be  
of

SERM. of an inferior Order, and yet you prefer

IX.  them, then you are highly unjust, and would take it very ill to be so treated your self. No wonder then if at those few broken Moments and Ends of Time, which are the refuse of your Pleasure, or what you mis-call your Business; when you vouchsafe to come before the divine Majesty, with defiled Hands, and Mind painted with the Gaudiness of Life, and an Heart wholly taken up in sensual, if not criminal, Affections: No wonder, I say, if your Prayers are not heard, which drop from you with as ill a Grace, as Alms from a Miser: for such Prayers are hurried over with such Precipitation, as if Men were afraid of a Toil, and that they were making an escape from God Almighty. By reason of which they are filled with such Indignities and mis-behaviours, that they bid fair for that Curse the royal Prophet wishes to the Enemies of God, that *their Prayers may be turned into sin.*

In fine therefore, my Brethren, Let us all seriously consider the Value of our Time. How glad shall we be one Day of one single Moment, out of those thousand Hours, we have let roll over our Heads unregarded? What would we give then for those Scraps of Time which we now abuse and throw away, even without Temptation. Let us  
therefore,

therefore, my Brethren, now be watchful, SERM.  
IX.  
 and mark every Moment as it passes, considering how short our Time is, and that this, this present Time is only what we can call our own: and that this, though our own, is swift, therefore to be used while we have it. But it is evil likewise; therefore let us sanctify it by an holy Conversation, and as much of it is already wasted, let us redeem it before the Glass is out. For he that has *sworn by him who lives for ever, that time shall be no more*, hath warned us, that that fatal Period is very near, that Life is the Time of Labour and Trial, and the Service of God the chief Business of Man, it is in the Power but of a few to consecrate themselves entirely to the Service of God. But to admit temporal Affairs in their order, and range them in a secondary Place, is the Duty of every one, it is not required to debar ourselves all Recreations and Pastimes; but it is very easy and necessary to choose those that are innocent no one for his Recreation is to descend from good Actions to bad ones, nor no one to spend his Time has leave to mispend it. Let us sum up all that has been said in the wise Man's Advice, which takes in every State and Condition whatsoever: *thy Hand findeth to do it with all thy Might, for there is no Knowledge nor Wisdom*



SERM. *Wisdom in the Grave whither we all going.*  
 IX. For which, by redeeming our Time, God  
 of his infinite Mercy grant that we may  
 all prepare ourselves.



SER-

## S E R M O N X.

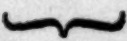
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*The true Method of attaining  
Happiness.*

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ECCLES. vii. 1.

*A good name is better then precious ointments; and the day of death, then the day of ones birth.*

**I**N the former Part of this Book, the S E R M.  
X.  
Preacher, sets before us, the many false  
Ways Men take in the Pursuit of Happiness:   
and here he comes to shew the only true  
Method of attaining it. He does indeed  
all along suppose, that the best State of  
Happiness in this Life is exceeding im-  
perfect: and therefore constantly advises,  
that we should not expect more from the  
things of this World, than their Nature  
will afford; but be content to take Men  
and

SERM. and Things as we find them; Things with  
 X. with their Uncertainty and Inconstancy,  
 and Men with their Faults and Miscar-  
 riages; since it is not in our Power to  
 alter their Nature, or render them such as  
 we would have them.

In order therefore, to our being in any  
 degree happy here, he tells us that it is  
 most necessary to regulate our Thoughts  
 and Opinions, concerning the Things of  
 this Life, and to embrace some Propositions  
 as most useful and true, which, to our  
 corrupt Nature and extravagant Passions,  
 may at first View seem as wild Contra-  
 dictions: such as that in many Cases, Mourn-  
 ing is to be preferred before Feasting;  
 Rebuke before Commendation; and pa-  
 tient enduring of Injuries and Affronts be-  
 fore a peevish and an haughty Mind;  
 Wisdom before Riches; and, to add no  
 more, that *A good Name is better than pre-  
 cious Ointments, and the Day of Death than  
 the Day of one's Birth.* In speaking to  
 which Words, it is my present Purpose to  
 shew you the Truth of these two Propo-  
 sitions, and, as I pass, the Connection that  
 is between them.

As for the first of these, that *A good Name  
 is better than precious Ointments*, let us con-  
 sider it according to the common Standard  
 it bears with Mankind, and we shall find  
 it



it to be a Thing of the highest Price among all the Objects of human Desire. For it is the chief Reward that the greatest and best Actions can pretend to, or are capable of, it is what generally bears the greatest Sway in our Hearts, and hath the strongest Influence upon the Lives of Men. For the Desire of this generally over-bears all other most potent Inclinations; and even sensual Pleasure itself will stoop thereto. For all Men in their Senses, to get and keep Reputation, will decline the most pleasing Enjoyments, and embrace the hardest Pains: yea it often prevails over the love of Life itself, which Men do not only frequently expose to danger, but sometimes devote to certain loss for its sake.

If we observe what is done in the World we easily discern that Credit, Reputation, or a *good Name*, are the Source of most Undertakings therein; for these not only move the Wheels of publick Action, and make Princes contend, Armies march, and Battles commence; but from these likewise most private Business derives its Life and Vigour, it is for Honour the Soldier undergoes Toil and Fatigue; the Man of Learning beats his Brains, and spends his Spirits in Watching and Application; it is for the same Thing the Men of Trade venture hard and far, and the meanest Artist spends  
O his

SER M. his Sweat, and stretcheth his Nerves. The  
 X. principal Drift of all, the Care and Industry,  
 the great Reason of all the scuffling for  
 Power, and scrambling for Wealth, seems  
 to be, that Men are willing to live in some  
 Credit, and raise themselves above Contempt,  
 so that Honour and a *good Name* is the  
 great Motive to most of our Actions,  
 that carry any Virtue in them.

And if we look nearer into the Thing,  
 we shall find there is something more  
 than mere Fashion and Imitation in it:  
 for there is an obvious Reason why great  
 Regard should be had to Reputation,  
 and a *good Name*; it being so highly con-  
 venient and useful, that without some com-  
 petent Measure of it, a Man cannot live  
 safely, quietly, or pleasantly. He cannot  
 well serve the Publick, perform Offices of  
 Duty to his Relations, of Kindness to his  
 Friends, or Charity to his Neighbours, but  
 under its Protection. And then it is most  
 requisite for the managing any Business, or  
 compassing any Design; for it procures  
 Assistance and removes Difficulties; it  
 guards a Man's Person from Offence,  
 and adds weight to his Words; and not  
 only sharpens but wings his Endeavours.  
 For every Man will lend a favour-  
 able Ear, and helping Hand to, and  
 make best Construction of him and his  
 Actions,

Actions, whose *good Name* and Reputation S E R M.  
commands Esteem and Respect. X.

So then it is very plain that *A good Name* is one of the most valuable Accommodations of Life; and as such, Reason approves it to our Judgment. But if we search a little farther, we shall find, that it hath still a deeper Ground, and is rooted even in Nature itself. For we may descry the Desire of Preference budding even in Infancy, and before the Use of Reason or Speech takes place. And then it grows with Age, and encreaseth with Knowledge, and good Education, and chiefly abounds in the most mature Age. It prevails most in civilized Nations; and Men of the best Improvements and highest Employments are most sensibly touched with it; and every Man, that is not quite stupid, can tell how difficult it is to resist or restrain it, and how impossible it is to stifle or extinguish it. For no Philosophy can dispute it down, or persuade it away; no Austerity can starve it, or Retirement shun it; no Affliction, or Poverty, no Wretchedness of Condition can totally suppress it; for it is a Spirit that not only haunts our Courts and Palaces, but frequents Schools and Cloysters, yea creeps into Cottages, into Hospitals, into Prisons; and even dogs Men into Desarts and Solitudes.



SERM. Thus any Endeavours to banish or extirpate this Desire are but fond and fruitless Attempts; and we may as well dispute against eating and drinking. For the Appetite of Honour is as innate to our Minds, as that of Hunger and Thirst is to our Bodies. So that, unless some violent Indisposition disturb us, it is never to be satisfied, but by the Enjoyment of its proper Object. And this Desire was originally implanted in us by the wise Author of Nature, for very great and good Ends; for it is the highest Engagement to Virtue, and Restraint to Vice, it is an Incitement to Industry; a Motive to Courage; it makes Men constant and persevering; so preserves a Constitution, and improves human Society. It cements the whole politick Frame, and keeps us from Dissolution; for did not some Love of Honour and *a good Name* glow in Mens Breasts, were that noble Spark quite extinct, I fear there would be few found pursuing honourable Qualities, or laudable Deeds. For there would be nothing to keep Men within the Bounds of Modesty and Decency, or deter them from doing what is most odious and infamous. For if Men cared not what others said of them, they would soon disregard what they did themselves; a barbarous Sloth, or brutish Stupidity would over-spread the World; and,

and, like a thick Cloud, hide from common Life much of its Ornaments, and most of its Conveniencies. Men generally would shun Society, and decline all the Cares and Burthens requisite to promote Welfare; for when the Reward to these things, which is nothing but honour, is taken away, I am afraid the Virtue would cease. SERM.  
X.

It is no wonder therefore, to see the very best of Men have the most tender, and delicate Sense of their Reputation; so that to touch that, is like a prick upon a Nerve, which causes immediate Convulsions. And this seems to be an excellent Provision in Nature, directing us to guard against the worst that can happen, and to secure the Accomplishment of our best Designs. So then the Love of Reputation and a good Name rightly grounded, and duly moderated, is not only the Parent and Guardian of all other Virtues, but a great Virtue in itself: a Virtue, which next to the Spirit of true Religion, doth certainly lift a Man nearest to Heaven. For it raises his Mind above the sordid Desires, the anxious Cares, the fond Humours, the perverse and froward Passions; with which Men are commonly possessed and acted by. This is the Virtue which inflames a Man's Courage, so that he dares perform what Reason and Duty requires of him, and makes him

SERM. disdain to do what is Mean or base, which  
X. inspires him with Sincerity, that values what  
is honest before all other Interests and Respects: that he abhors to wrong, or deceive, to flatter, or abuse any Man, or to act any otherwise than he promises or professes. This endows him with Courtesy, and makes him ready to yield to every Man due Respect, and to afford to any Man what Succour and help he is able. This is the Virtue that renders a Man upright in all his Dealings. and true to all his Obligations. It makes him a loyal Subject to his Prince, a true Lover of his Country; a candid Judge of Persons and Things, an earnest Favourer of whatsoever is good, and commendable; a faithful and hearty Friend; a beneficial and useful Neighbour; a grateful and kind Resenter of Benefits: hospitable to Strangers; bountiful to the Poor; kind and good to all the World. This is the Virtue, in fine, which constitutes the Man of Honour, which certainly is the best Man next to the Man of Conscience.

And thus we may see how Reputation and a good Name ought to be valued: how much better it is than the most precious Ointments, even by the Notion we have of Things, by natural Light, and according to common Sense. But beyond all this, the Holy Scripture, that most certain Standard,



Standard, by which we may examine and S E R M.  
determine of the true Worth of Things, X.  
that doth not teach us to slight Honour, and  
*a good Name*, but rather to adjust the  
Measure of our Love towards it. It in-  
structs us not to take away its Foundation,  
but to ground it well; not upon bad  
Qualities, and wicked Devices, that's villain-  
ous Madness; not upon things of a mean  
and indifferent Nature, that's Vanity; not  
upon counterfeit Shews and Pretences,  
that's base Hypocrisy; but upon real Worth  
and Goodness, that may consist with Mo-  
desty, and Sobriety. It enjoins us not to  
be immoderate in the Desires thereof, nor  
Complacencies therein; not to be irregular  
in the Pursuit; to be so is Pride and Am-  
bition; but to seek it calmly and purchase  
it fairly, without the least Injury done to  
the Honour of another Man. It directs  
us not to make a Regard thereto our chief  
End, but often to bear contentedly the  
the Want and Loss thereof; yea in some  
Cases, for Conscience sake, and for God's  
Service, it obliges us to prostitute and sacrifice  
our *good Name*, and chuse rather to be in-  
famous than impious; to be in disgrace  
with Men, rather than out of favour with  
God; remembring always that we are Dis-  
ciples of the Cross, and must be content  
sometimes to pass thro' evil Report as well

SERMON. as good Report. In fine, it commands us to  
 X. seek and embrace it, only in Subordina-  
 tion to God's Glory. But, with these Dis-  
 tinctions and Cautions: Reputation and a  
 good Name are represented in Scripture, as  
 excellently good, and to be pursued with-  
 out blame: and therefore we find it pre-  
 ferred before all other good Things: *A good  
 Name is better then precious Ointments;*  
 yea, *a good Name*, says the wise Man, *is  
 rather to be chosen than great Riches.*

Hence it comes to pass, that we are  
 commanded to walk decently, to provide  
 things honest in the Sight of all Men;  
 that is, not only Things good in Substance,  
 but goodly in Appearance, and with regard  
 to Mens Opinions; to have our Conversa-  
 tion honest before the Gentiles, fair and  
 plausible, such as may commend us and  
 our Profession to those who observe us:  
 And the same Apostle exhorts us to mind  
 not only whatsoever Things are *just, or  
 true, or pure*, but also whatever Things  
 are *venerable*, are *lowly*, are *gracious*, and *plea-  
 sant in Mens Eyes and Esteem*; whatever  
 Things are *well reported and reputed of*;  
 He charges us, not only *if there be any  
 Virtue*, but *if there be any Praise*, we should  
 mind such Things.

And lastly the blessed State hereafter  
 is represented by St Paul, as a State of  
 Glory

Glory and Honour, to be ambitious of which S E R M.  
he gives us, as the Character of the most X.  
perfect Man. *To every Man, says he, shall*  
*God render according to his Works: to them,*  
*who, by patient Continuance in well doing,*  
*seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality,*  
*eternal Life.*

And thus I have done with the first Proposition, and shewn that *a good Name is better than precious Ointments.* But now I must not stay to make any particular Inferences from hence, nor at present to shew what scandalous Invasion of Right, what horrid and barbarous murdering and butchering of our Brethren it is, to offer to defraud them of, or injure their *good Name* and Reputation, that darling Delight of human Nature; which when taken away, like Life itself, is never to be repaid, nor can we make full Restitution for. But these things I must not enlarge upon, by reason as in these corrupt Times, they would offend our Ears, so at present they would our Patience too, and fill up too much of that Time which is allotted us for handling the second Proposition; *and the Day of Death, than the Day of one's Birth.*

But before I pass to this, I promised, and it will be very convenient to my present Purpose, to shew the Connection between the two Comparisons in the Text. And  
this



SERMON. this shall cost us little or no Time. Observe we then, that in the first Proposition is represented to us, how far *a good Name* does exceed all other worldly Goods. But then the Comparison is particularly between that and *precious Ointments*. Now possibly the Preacher had regard, in this Expression, to the Manner and Custom of the *Jews* in their Funerals, which was to embalm the Dead with costly and precious Ointments, in Order to preserve the Body, to the Memory of the Man. Now, he in Allusion to this, very elegantly urges that *a good Name* was much *better*, even for this Purpose, than the most *precious Ointment*, it being certainly of a more lasting and during Quality, and would surely blossom, and send forth a sweet smelling Savour when all Ointments and Perfumes shall perish and decay, and serve our poor Bodies for no other use, but to make the Corruption the more strong and nauseous, and in a very little while to be swallowed up in the common dust, and clear forgotten, as if he had never been. But *a good Name* will reach beyond Death, and the Grave; nay till time is no more; for *the Just shall be had in everlasting Remembrance, and his Name shall never be blotted out*; now when a Man dies, and is thus embalmed, when he dies the Death of the Righteous, then surely his *latter End*

*is better than his Beginning, the Day of his Death, than the Day of his Birth.* And thus we may easily observe a plain and natural Connection, between the two Propositions in the Text, without in the least straining the Sense of either of them. SERM. X

Now this being premised, I proceed to the second Particular, *and the Day of Death, than the Day of one's Birth.* Was a Man to die in a sinful, unregenerate State, loaded with Wickedness, and Sense of Misery; then we cannot conceive that he should ever see a more dismal Day than that. For to die, to him is certainly the utmost evil; but to die in the Sense of the Preacher, having done well, and made his Memory precious, then certainly a Man's going out of this World, is much happier to him than his Entrance in. Tho' it must be confessed, it is a little shocking, to see a Man, in the midst of his Years and Hopes, admired, loved, and esteemed, sink down plum into the Grave, and be seen no more. When Nature takes her Course and we linger out our threescore Years and ten; tho' we may then cling to Life, yet there cannot be such Struggles at parting, as when a loving and beloved Friend, in the Noon of his Age, descends to the Grave. But dress we the Circumstances as melancholy as we can, yet still to him the Day  
of

SERM. *of his Death*, will be *better* and *happier*

X. *than the Day of his Birth*; and that for  
 these Reasons, as first, It puts him into  
 a far better state of Health and Vigour than  
 can be found here: *Man is born to Trouble*  
*as the Sparks fly upward*; and scarce a  
 Day passes him, from his Cradle to his  
 Grave, but he feels some Pain. For we  
 find by woful Experience, that there is no  
 perfect Exemption from, nor sure guard a-  
 gainst, that Crowd of Diseases, which are  
 constantly annoying us: and we often see  
 the best of Men labouring under crazy Con-  
 stitutions, and languishing out their Days  
 in great Pain and Uneasiness; and even in  
 their most vigorous State, they have very  
 dark Intervals of wearisome Days, and rest-  
 less Nights; their Qualms and Oppressions  
 render Life very grievous and afflictive,  
 and make them even wish to be insensible.  
 But when the Soul shall take wing, and  
 with incredible Swiftnefs mount up to the  
 immortal Regions, than shall the Man com-  
 plain no more of a cloudy Brain, or wearied  
 Limbs, of drooping Spirits, or oppressed  
 Bowels, but shall live for ever in perfect  
 Ease, Health, and Vigour.

If therefore, it be better to be well than  
 sick, to be at ease than weary, to be vigorous  
 than dull and supine, then certainly it is  
 incomparably better for a good Man, who  
 hath



hath Assurance of a better Life hereafter, S E R M.  
to die than live; and that further, because X.

Death entertains us with far better Enjoy-  
ments, than any this Life can afford, for the  
highest gust of Pleasure here, consists more  
in Appearance, than real good; for we plain-  
ly find, that our Imagination of Things is  
much better than our Enjoyment, and whilst  
we are in pursuit, we still fancy we shall  
be much happier than we find our-  
selves in the Possession. For so delusive  
are most outward Goods, that they will not  
bear the Test of a long Fruition, how fair  
soever they seem in our expecting Eye, yet  
Enjoyment presently rifles and deflowers  
them; the first Taste may, tho' not always,  
be grateful; but after a few Repetitions,  
it presently grows flat, if not loathsome;  
when we have but little, our Appetites  
crave and are impatient for more, and when  
our Cup is full, then we debauch and sur-  
feit. So that in reality our Pleasure  
consists only in being replete, till we are  
weary and displeased, till we feel no Plea-  
sure; for till it hath pleased us, it is not Plea-  
sure, when it hath pleased us, it commonly  
ceases to be so. So that in truth, all that  
the World calls Happiness, is only a great  
and eager Expectation of Pleasure, for  
no sooner have we tasted the desired Ob-  
ject, but the Pleasure dies, and thus we seek in  
vain to find out Bliss in Variety, and Va-  
nity

S E R M. nity in fond Expectation and fore Disap-  
X. pointment.

And now methinks, after we have made so many Trials of the Truth of all this, we shall at last grow weary of the repeated Imposture, sick of this Scene of Vanity, this perpetual Rotation of our unsatisfied Desires, which certainly bewilder us, whilst we follow the Dictates of our blind and roving Imagination, which pretends to lead us to Happiness, but knows not how. But if we cast our Eye into that State of Life, whereunto Death translates us; there we shall find a more satisfactory Account of things, there we shall find Pleasures that will dwell up on the Palate, and endure everlasting Fruition; such as will not shrink and wither, whilst they are gathering, nor die in the Enjoyment; but will improve upon using, and grow bigger by repeating.

Our present Sensations, how grateful soever, are slippery and evanid; and their stay but momentary, for they affect us only just when they glide over the Organs of our Senses; so that we are obliged to tire ourselves in renewing the Motion, and then we drop for a Time into a State of Insensibility, before we can begin them again.

But those heavenly Pleasures are such as will indeed very strongly move and affect, but never weary our Faculties. They are  
such

such as will never grow languid, but quicken S E R M.  
by Motion and add Desire by Enjoyment. **X.**

For the more we know of them, the more we shall love them, and the more we love, the more we shall rejoice and love, and rejoice anew. And in this blessed Circle, without Fear of Disappointment, or finding any End. And if these Things are so, then surely it is much happier for a Man prepared for Heaven, to take his Leave and go hence; to pass from this howling Wilderness, into the Land of Promise, and exchange fantastick Illusions, for real, substantial, and eternal Pleasure.

And beside all this, Death likewise will introduce us into far better Company, than we can possibly converse with or find here, for when we rightly consider the Folly and degenerate State of corrupt Nature, there is no great Improvement or Satisfaction to be expected from human Society. But while we live among Men, we must be content with such Conversation as we find, and not always expect to find such as we would have. Sometimes we must be entertained with the empty and tedious Din of impertinent babbling; and at other Times bear with Passion and Peevishness, and be scorched with the Fire of Wrangling and Contention; sometimes we must be ruffled by Insolence, and content to be abused and  
born



SERM. born down by Authority; at other times

X. we shall be assaulted by Falshood and Treachery, and be exposed to a thousand Snares; sometimes we must endure the nauseous Steam of fulsome and obscene Talk, or, what is worse, the horrid Sound of Profanefs and Blasphemy; at other times we must be plagued with the Venom of poisonous Breath, and be tormented with Calumny and Detraction; in fine, we must see Malice and Treachery cloathed under the fair pretence of Civility and Friendship, and pious End pretended to promote ambitious Designs; Charity and Union extolled to advance Revenge and Division; Zeal for publick Good, counterfeited only to serve private Passions and Interest: all which are very disagreeable Things to a Man of any Sincerity or good Nature. Yet some, if not all of these we are forced to endure, in most of our Conversation with Men. And what rude and barbarous Company is this! it is enough to provoke a wise Man to break out into that melancholy Wish and Complaint of the Prophet, *O that I had in the Wilderness a lodging Place of Way-faring Men, that I might leave my People and go from them: for they are an Assembly of treacherous Men; they bend their Tongues like their Bows for Lyes, but they are not valiant for the Truth upon the Earth:*

Earth: take ye heed every one of his Neighbour, and trust ye not in any Brother; for every Brother will utterly supplant, and every Neighbour walk with Slander; for they have taught their Tongue to speak Lyes, and weary themselves to commit Iniquity. SERM.  
X.

And, is not this choice Company for a wife or a good Man to be fond of? Is it not much better to withdraw, nay to die than to live in such perpetual Jargon? Especially considering how much better Company Death will certainly lead us to, to the Company of blessed Angels and the Spirits of just Men made perfect to the Company of most refined Souls, the most Wise and Knowing, the most Kind and Courteous, the most Faithful and Just, most Humble and meekest, the most every thing that can render Company delightful and endearing, so that with them our Conversation will be a perpetual Inter-course of Wisdom and Love, Fidelity and Truth; without Jealousy or Design, Caution or Reserve. A blessed Society! where every one is a Friend to every one, where all are happy to their utmost Wishes; and every one rejoices and shares in every one's Happiness. This is a Company one would travel far for; and if such be

SERM. the Society, Death lets us into, who would  
 X. dispute to die? For I leave to every Man's  
 Judgment, whether it be not much better to  
 leave this peevish and ill-natured World,  
 and converse no longer with such trouble-  
 some Companions, especially when the Gate  
 opens to so glorious a Company, filled  
 with immense Joy.

And thus *I have gone thro' the two Pro-  
 positions in the Text, as I at first propos'd.*  
 Give me leave to make an Inference or  
 two and conclude.

First then, from what hath been said,  
 we may safely infer, that it is very un-  
 reasonable to be sorry, *like Men without hope*,  
 for those that sleep in God. I know very  
 well, that the Custom of all Nations, that  
 Nature itself directs not to part with a dying  
 Friend, without dropping some Sighs or  
 Tears; and some Peoples Passions are ex-  
 ceeding extravagant this Way. But then we  
 may observe, that this Sorrow is more properly  
 for themselves, than for the deceased. It  
 is the loss of some Pleasure or Profit that  
 the Person gone administred to us, that  
 creates the Trouble. And this renders it  
 as little commendable as reasonable, we may  
 say and pretend what we will, and express  
 ourselves as tenderly as we please concern-  
 ing a deceased Friend or Relation, but it  
 is



is self at the bottom, that gives the Pain. SERM.  
X.  
For in truth, we should be ungrateful and unkind to him to wish him back again, since he is gone to a far better Country, which is an heavenly. And for this we should heartily rejoice, tho' our own Passions and Interests strangely lead us to the contrary. St Paul had well considered this Thing when he wrote to the *Philippians*, *I am in a strait, betwixt two, having a Desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless, to abide in the Flesh is more needful for you.* So that the Loss on such occasions is our Loss, and not our Friends; and therefore we should humbly submit to divine Providence, and with Job consider, that as it was *the Lord that gave*, so it is *the Lord that taketh away*, and still we should *blest the Name of the Lord.*

The Practice of *David* therefore is very commendable on such occasions; who, whilst the Child of his Bosom yet lived, mourned and wept, and put Sackcloth under him, and with Prayers and Tears implored the Almighty Power to spare unto him his beloved: But when God thought fit not to grant such his Request, but took the Child unto himself, *David* readily, and without the least murmur resigned. He washed himself, they put on Bread, and

SERM. he did eat and cheared himself with this

X. Consideration; *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.* And thither we must all soon go. Vain therefore are our Lamentations for the Dead, and very soon there will be the very same occasion to lament for us.

And therefore we may from what hath been said, and in the last Place, infer, that the proper Use we should all make of living at present, is so to live that we may be happy hereafter. For, if Death be better than Life, it can be upon no other account so, than as we die in order to live for ever. It is indeed very strange, that any reasonable Creatures should entertain such sordid Thoughts of themselves, as to think that they were born for no other Purpose, than to eat and drink, to sleep and awake, and to run this foolish Maze for a small succession of Years; and then to return into eternal Silence, where all things are forgotten, and are well enough pleased to think that they shall be no more. I seriously profess I cannot but wonder, that any one who thinks so abjectly of himself, should ever have the Patience to outlive such a Thought, or avoid the Temptation of dispatching himself out of this Crowd and Hurry, into the dark Retirement of the silent Grave. But in the Name of God  
let

let us at last remember, that we were born S E R M.  
for higher things than these, for far more X.  
solid and substantial Enjoyments; and being  
assured of this, for shame let us rouse up  
ourselves, and shake off this sordid and de-  
generate Temper; and let us act as becomes  
the Dignity of rational and immortal Na-  
tures; let us now at length arise, and trim  
our Lamps, that we with all those dear  
Friends, that are gone before, may in the  
last great and mighty Day, be admitted  
into the Joy of our Master. Grant this  
O Father, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.





# SERMON XI.

## *The Business of our Salvation.*

PHIL. ii. 12.

*Work out your own Salvation with  
fear and trembling.*

SERM.  
XI.

**W**HEN a Man looks calmly and coolly into the World, and seriously considers, how careless and remiss the greatest Part of Mankind are, in Matters of Religion; and how they dream away their precious Time, the one half in sleep, and the rest in Vanity; nay, when he farther considers that there is the greatest Negligence shown, even amongst the best of Men, to those things which do most nearly concern them, then he cannot but think  
it

it highly necessary, and mostly good natured, to labour at least to awake Men out of such dangerous Lethargies, and put them in Mind of the Apostle's most reasonable Exhortation, of *working out their Salvation with fear and trembling.* By which Words we are given to understand, that the Business of our Salvation is a Work that must be attended with the highest Industry, and Labour. Less than this cannot be meant by those weighty Expressions, of *working out our Salvation with fear and trembling*: for *fear and trembling* doth necessarily suppose the greatest Danger, and where the Danger is greatest there certainly ought to be strictest guard. There we should watch with the most curious Caution, and avoid with the swiftest Diligence. And this the Holy Scripture, in other forms of Speech, very earnestly presseth upon us and highly provoketh us unto. *Strive*, says the Apostle, *to enter in at the strait Gate: give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure: fight the good Fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal Life: and take heed lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in parting from the living God.* From these, and many other such Expressions, it evidently appears; with how much holy Seriousness, and studied

SERM. died Diligence, this great Business of our Sal-  
 XI. vation ought to be managed by every Chri-  
 stian Man.

My present Endeavours therefore shall be employed, in persuading my self and others, to take the most reasonable, as well as most seasonable, Advice of the Apostle, and to *work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*. And certainly we have the most weighty Reasons in Nature, to engage us in this Practice. As first, That our Salvation is a Matter of the highest Concernment to us; and therefore if there be any Affair in the World, which we should manage with *fear and trembling*; with the greatest Intention of Spirit, and seriousness of Thought; then certainly our Salvation is that Affair. For our Souls are at stake, and their eternal Estate wholly depends upon our Management here. If therefore, thro' our Sloth or Carelessness, they come to miscarry, what can countervail this Loss? For *what shall it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul: or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* It is a Kingdom that we contend for, and is set before us as the Price of our high Calling: It is a Crown of eternal Glory, that is promised to us; if we strive lawfully, and quit ourselves like Men. What holy Diligence, or solicitous Care, can we think



think too much, to secure our title to such a Kingdom? Let us therefore, as the Apostle adviseth, *fear least a Promise being left, of entering into this Rest, any of us should fatally come short of it*; for it is not only the Loss of a Kingdom that we hazard, an earthly Kingdom, generally filled with anxious Care and ill boding Fear; but of a Kingdom replenished with Joys, that are unutterable: such as *neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear hath heard, nor have entred into the Heart of Man to conceive.* And these if we lose, that is but half our Misfortune; for then we unavoidably split upon the Rock of eternal Destruction. For there is no middle Condition; but if we come short of Heaven, we must unavoidably be plunged into the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone. For in the last great and mighty Day, the Sheep and the Goats will divide the World; and there are but two final Sentences to be pronounced: *come ye blessed and go ye cursed.* And if the former be not our joyful Invitation, the latter must be our dreadful Doom. And when we coolly examine and consider this, then we must acknowledge, that the Apostle had just Reason to exhort us, to *work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*; and that it highly concerns us to *flee from the Wrath to come*: and, since these things must come to pass, seriously to reflect with our selves,

SERM. selves, *what manner of Persons we ought*

XI. *to be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness.* And to engage our Minds to dwell more constantly in such Contemplation; we should farther consider, that the Work of our Salvation is not only a Business of the highest and last Importance to us, but it likewise consists in great Labour and Difficulty, and therefore still to be attended with greater Diligence. For otherwise every little thing, and slight Temptation will be apt to make us loiter and neglect this Duty: for by Nature we have little or no mind to this Work. Hence it comes to pass, that Men so often procrastinate and postpone; that they shift and put off this weighty Business from Day to Day; and when they do really engage in it, they do it generally with Coldness and Indifference; and a spiritual Sloth and Supineness visibly benums their Souls.

For when we consider either ourselves or others, we cannot but see, how very easily this great work is at any time interrupted, if not broken off; or at best with how much Inconstancy and Unevenness it is always carried on. And then besides this natural Aversion in our selves, the Opposition which is made by the great Enemy of Mankind is another Thing, which adds much Difficulty to this Work.

Work. For he is always ready to offer Di-  
vertisments, and suggest other work to be  
done: and this he does by laying all man-  
ner of Discouragements in our way. Some-  
times he advances both the Greatness and  
the Number of our Sins, and insinuates  
that it is in vain to seek the Pardon of  
them, by representing the Ways of God  
so rigid and severe, that he who enters upon  
them must abandon Nature, and shackle his  
Senses. If this fail, then on the other  
Hand he attempts the Men of Liberty to  
think, that the Road to Heaven is smooth  
and easy, and therefore to be so careful and  
solicitous about our Salvation, is to put our  
selves to more trouble than is needful, and  
making Life one continued Scene of Misery  
and trouble. And if neither of these pre-  
vails, yet he hath one reserve more, with  
which he rarely fails to delude poor Mor-  
tals: and that is by deceiving them with  
the foolish Imagination, that they have time  
enough before them, and that there is no  
such haste; for they may secure their Souls,  
and make their peace with God at a more  
convenient Season, when Age or Sickness  
approach. Add to this, how easy we are  
deceived, nay, how ready we are to de-  
ceive and persuade ourselves, that our Estate  
is good enough already, and that such migh-  
ty Care is by no means needful, concerning  
things

SERM.

XI.



SER M. things so distant and remote. All these  
 XI. things considered, plainly demonstrate the  
 Difficulty of this great work, and the reasonableness of our giving all Diligence possible to make our Calling and Election sure; and that we may do so we should consider, that we shall never have cause to repent of having been too careful or solicitous in this Matter. Did any Man ever hear a dying creature complain, that he had spent too much time in Watching, Fasting, or Prayer; or that his Heart then mis-gave him for any good he had done. No surely, these are not the Strains of departing Souls; but on the other hand who ever attended a sick Bed, where any Seriousness appeared, but constantly heard bitter Complaints of former Negligence and a mournful account of having *left undone those Things which they ought to have done, and of doing those Things which they ought not to have done*: that this World, and the Pleasures of it, have filled, taken up, and and possessed their Souls, and that they have slightly minded things that are eternal, things which they now see can only procure, and do only belong to their true Peace. And if this be a fair Representation, and such generally be the final issue of things, then 'tis most plain that we  
 can

can never be better employed, nor our S E R M.  
Strength spent to greater Advantage, than XI.  
in the Works of our Salvation. 

Heavenly things are the only things, that truly deserve all our Pains and all our Labour; for they are most precious and excellent, the true Rules; and they are most refreshing, in truth the one thing needful: but then they are the most satisfactory Things too. While we weary ourselves, in the eager and restless Pursuit of earthly Things, we are all that while *forsaking the fountains of living Water, and hewing to ourselves broken Cisterns, that will hold no Water. We spend our Money for that which is not Bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not.* But heavenly things never fail to satisfy the most out-stretched Wishes, and to add still to their Value. They forever remain to do so; for they only are *the Meat that perisheth not, but endureth to everlasting Life. They are the Treasure in Heaven that faileth not, where no Thief approacheth, nor Moth corrupteth.*

So then no Pains can be thought too much, no Labour too great, to purchase these things: but every wise Merchant will sell all that he hath, to buy this Treasure. And if this be right Reasoning, then certainly it is the highest Folly and Mistake, to be careless and slothful in the Pursuit

S E R M. of these most valuable Things, We grudge  
 XI. not to labour, toil, and sweat, to compass  
 those things which are really foreign to us,  
 and perish in the using: and at the same  
 time to pass regardless by the most in-  
 viting and durable Treasure, and such as  
 God framed on Purpose to fill up the Measure  
 of human Happiness. Thus, with prophane  
*Esau*, we despise our Birthrights, and sa-  
 crifice our chiefest Blessings to our basest  
 Appetites; and this most degenerate Practice  
 of ours, if not soon amended, is certainly  
 Matter of most just Provocation unto God,  
 to withdraw himself and his glorious Blessing  
 from us, to give us up unto our own  
 Hearts Lust, and let us wallow in our  
 own Mire, and to swear in his wrath  
 that we shall never enter into his Rest.  
 When the Guests in the Gospel were in-  
 vited to Supper, but slighted the Invita-  
 tion, and triflingly excused their coming,  
 see how the Master resents such their Con-  
 tempt: he passionately expresseth himself  
 thus, *I say unto you, none of those Men which  
 were invited shall taste of my Supper.* We  
 should all consider this, and tremble at the  
 Thoughts of the like dreadful Sentence  
 against ourselves. We who are all daily  
 and hourly most graciously invited by our  
 great Lord and Master, to the most noble  
 Entertainment of spiritual Joys; and who,  
 if



if we will hearken to, and obey his Call, S E R M.  
will himself come in and sup with us. **XI.**

And yet notwithstanding all this, so vile we are, as to make perpetual Excuses, and will not be at the least Pains or Expence, to equip ourselves with wedding Garments.

And now, what can we say for our selves, under such scandalous Deportment. It will not be sufficient for us to offer, that there is a great deal of Labour and travail to be undergone, in securing to our selves a Portion in those excellent things, which God hath prepared for them that love him. For a small compass of Time will remove that Trouble, which, when compared with the Reward, will be but for a Moment. For after a very few Days the Times of Refreshment will come, and *tho' Heaviness may endure for the Night, yet Joy will come in the Morning*; when we shall awake, and be at Rest in *Abraham's Bosom*, and for ever enjoy there, what what we have shortly laboured for here.

So then, in this great and weighty Affair of our Souls, if we will but act as common Prudence directs in any other Matter of Importance, we could not fail of Success. And that we may not do so, let us lose no Opportunity, but take hold of the fittest Season, which is the present, to improve our Interest; for it is irrational to  
put

SERM. put off so weighty a concern from Day  
 XI. to Day. It will soon be too late for the  
 time of Grace; and the Day of Salvation  
 runs out with incredible Swiftneſs; and as  
 we ſhould be careful not quite to looſe, ſo  
 neither ſhould we ſtraighten ourſelves in  
 time. And to this even worldly Policy  
 directs us.

It concerns us therefore to begin immediately to ſet about this mighty Undertaking; for we know not how little Time we may have yet remaining, to diſpatch it in; and though we were ſure to live many Years, yet the longer we defer it, the more difficult it will ſtill be. For every Day will add to our Sins, and we ſhall every Day be more and more hardened, thro' the deceitfulneſs of Sin. And yet, beſides all this, reſt aſſured, that the Time of our whole Life, when extended to its utmoſt length, will be found little enough to make Proviſion for Eternity. How ſoon ſoever therefore we begin to lay in our Stock, it will be very well, if when Death comes, he finds us prepared with ſufficient for our Journey. For when our Feet come to tread upon the dark Mountains, then though we ſhall chiefly want Lights, yet will it be the moſt improper Time for trimming our Lamps; highly ſufficient for thoſe Days will be  
 the

the Evils thereof. Then to bear our Infirmities patiently, is as much as we can well expect. Then we ought to have little else to do than be old and weak, to be sick and die; and so go off the Stage with a Christian Decency, and not act our last Part in Surprise and with Confusion.

But tho' we may, as I have been advising heartily, embrace this noble Task; and to Day, whilst it is called to Day, we will not harden our Hearts, but instantly set about this mighty Work, and pursue it too with some Diligence; yet still we must add Perseverance to our Practice, and Continuance to the End: or else all our Labour will be lost.

The Expression which the Apostle makes use of in the Text, and is by our common Translation rendered *to work out*, signifies to *polish*, *adorn*, or *beautify*: so then we must, like the skilful Artificer, complete and finish our Work, and set the last shining Stroke thereto. And this Perseverance in Faith and Holiness, is what the Scripture every where strictly enforceth. Having therefore such promises by our Apostle in this Chapter, *let us cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God, let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us: let us run out and finish it, and*

Q

not



SERM. *not faint in our Labour: let us hold fast*  
 XI. *the Profession of our Faith, without waver-*  
*ing, and be stedfast, unmoveable, and not*  
*weary in well doing.*

Now, such Perseverance is absolutely necessary, because without it little is to be expected for all our past Labour; for the Promises of Reward, and eternal Life, are made only to such as continue in the Faith, and finish their Course. He that endureth to the End shall be saved; we are made Partakers of Christ, that is, of Mercy, by his Mediation, if we hold the Beginning of our Confidence stedfast unto the End: *be thou faithful unto the Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* And upon this constant Perseverance it was, the Apostle concluded he should be saved: *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith; therefore henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that Day.*

This Consideration loudly calls upon all those who have left their first love, and, like *Demas*, have forsaken Christ their Master, and adhered to the World, to open their Eyes, and see what Condition they are now in, and if possible recover themselves. At present miserable is  
 their

their State, and hardly to be mentioned SERM.  
without Astonishment. It might indeed XI.  
before their Apostacy have been said of them,   
as our Saviour said of the Scribe, that they  
were *not far from the Kingdom of God*;  
but now it must be said of them that  
they are not far from the Kingdom of  
Hell, and the Regions of Darkness. Thi-  
ther they are swiftly descending; for God  
hath said, that *if any Man draw back,*  
*his Soul shall have no Pleasure in him: if*  
*any Man hath put his Hand to the Plough,*  
*and looked back, he is not fit for the King-*  
*dom of Heaven,* and that such as *draw back,*  
*draw back unto Perdition.* Wherefore re-  
member from whence you are fallen, and  
repent; for such as fall off are certainly  
much worse than ever they were before they  
set their face towards Heaven, or took upon  
them the Profession of Religion. For it  
most commonly appears, that none are so  
bad, so vile, so profligately wicked, as those  
who have sometimes made Profession of Re-  
ligion, and afterwards have broke its Bands,  
and cast away its Cords from them. Of  
such Apostates St Peter saith, *that the latter*  
*End is worse with them than the Beginning;*  
and that *it had been better for them, not to*  
*have known the Way of Righteousness, than*  
*after they have known it to turn from the*  
*holy Commandment delivered unto them.*

SERM.

XI.

If the Devil ever recover the Possession of a Breast, where he hath been once foiled, then to make sure Work, and if it be possible, for ever after to secure such a Person to himself, *he taketh with him seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last State of that Man is worse than the first.* And to the Truth of this daily Experience beareth Witness: For how few Apostates are ever recovered, or how few Arch-Hereticks are ever reclaimed, or how very few taken captive by Satan, the second Time ever return to the Light.

It highly concerns us therefore, to look to our selves, and be careful, least it become almost *impossible for us, who have been once enlightned, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, if we fall away, to be renewed again unto Repentance.* To the End therefore that we may never fall away, but cleave unto God with full Purpose of Heart, and persevere in Faith and Holiness unto the End; let us be sure to lay a good Foundation at the first, let us not take up the Profession of Religion rashly and unadvisedly, but upon sound and mature Deliberation. There are the best Reasons in the World, to engage us in the Practice of Virtue, and the Faith of the Gospel. Let us then make diligent Enquiry into them, and when we see the  
Weight



Weight and Force of them, and are fully S E R M.  
convinced and satisfied that it is our highest XI.  
Concernment, to act according to those  
mighty Truths we are convinced of; then  
let us enter upon the Ways of God with  
firm and steady Resolutions, never to recede  
from them. It is very obvious, that what  
we lightly and unadvisedly take up, that we  
are very likely to lay down with the same  
Precipitancy: but what we take up advis-  
edly and upon sound Deliberation, that we  
are most likely to hold fast and adhere unto.  
We have seen many in our Days, who have  
fallen from that Profession of Religion, which  
they formerly made and turned aside after  
Fables; a Spirit of Error and Delusion hath  
drawn them off from the right Way.  
Now tho' it may be true, that there have  
been also other Reasons for this their Prac-  
tice; yet I look upon the chief Cause of  
their Fickleness and Inconstancy to be, that  
they never laid a good Foundation; they  
never took the Pains to look so far into the  
Grounds of Religion, as to be thoroughly  
satisfied that the Things which they made  
Profession of were the undoubted Truths of  
God; and the Way they walked in the true  
and strait Way to Heaven. Some little  
smattering Knowledge they had concerning  
Religion, and a little slight Acquaintance  
with the Scriptures, but no better than that

SERM. of those, concerning whom the Apostle  
 XI. speaks, *who were ever learning, but never*  
 { *able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.*

So that for Want of a fixed and settled Foundation, it is no Wonder to see Men shaken in Mind by every Wind of Doctrine, and unstable in all their Ways. To be well grounded and fixed in our Principles, therefore is of greater Advantage in our Christian Warfare. But then 'tis highly necessary, to add to this Sincerity, and that will keep the Foundation stable and constant, for the Righteous shall hold on his Way, and he that hath clean Hands shall be stronger and stronger: but Hypocrites, who under a fair outward Shew of Religion, are rotten at Heart, will some time or other discover their Unsoundness, by falling from that outward Profession they made, and by giving themselves up to open Profaneness. David saith of his People, that their Heart was not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant. So then it is want of Uprightness of Heart, that makes Men fickle and unconstant in Religion: for had their Heart been right with God, they would have been stedfast in his Covenant.

But after all, the best we can do, and the highest Sincerity we can obtain, tho' our Spirit be never so willing, yet still the Flesh will be weak; and therefore we must expect

to meet with Difficulties, Discouragements, SERM.  
and Temptations: and it is our Business to XI.  
arm our selves with Resolutions against them. 

He that thinks to lift himself under Christ's Banner must first do, as he who first intends to build a Tower, first sits down and counts what it will cost him. For otherwise, in the Ways of Holiness, tho' generally speaking *her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*, yet he may meet with some Rubs, which he looked not for, and then if he finds the Cost, he must be at, to be greater than he expected, 'tis possible he may repent him of his Undertaking, and return to his Vomit, and pursue his Folly with more Eagerness than before. But to secure us from such a fatal Miscarriage, let us in the last Place, with the deepest Sense of our own Weakness, look up to God for Strength to persevere; for we have no Strength to lend, but what we receive from him: *Thou upholdest me in my Integrity*, says the Psalmist; *surely in the Lord I have Righteousness and Strength*, says the Prophet: and therefore the Apostle exhorts all Christians, to be *strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*. For if we confide in our own Strength, we are not only in Danger but shall assuredly fall. Therefore Solomon says, *he that trusteth in*



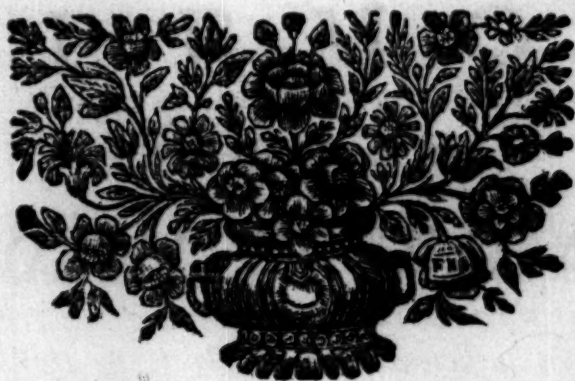
SERM. *his own Heart is a Fool, but he that trusteth*  
 XI. *in the Lord happy is he.* And accordingly

*David observes, that they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed but abideth for ever, for in Jehovah is everlasting Strength.*

Tho' therefore *we must work out our own Salvation*, yet least we should run into so great a Mistake, as to think we can work it out our selves, by the Power of Nature, the Apostle presently adds, that *it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do*; 'tis he that supplies us with, and enables us to put forth, that Strength, which he is pleased to give. Our Saviour hath told us, that *without him we can do nothing*. And the Apostle acknowledgeth all his Powers to be from God. *I can*, says he, *do all Things thro' Christ strengthening me*; but *we are not sufficient of our selves, to think any Thing as of our selves: but our Sufficiency is from God*. And as for our meriting Heaven by our good Works, the Falseness of such a Conceit is as conspicuous as the Pride and Vanity of it. For if we be indebted to God for whatsoever Good is done by us: if we owe all to the Influence of his Grace, how can we merit the least Thing at his Hands, much less those great, glorious and eternal good Things, which he hath promised

*The Business of our Salvation.* 233

mitted to confer upon us, and which we SERM.  
can only hope for, and to which in his XI.  
own good Time may he bring us all in  
and thro' the Mediation of his dear Son  
Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



The History of the Republic of the United States

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*The good Soldier of Jesus Christ.*

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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED at the

ROYAL HOSPITAL

A T

C H E L S E Y.

The good Soldier of Jesus Christ

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

ROYAL HOSPITAL

AT

C H E L S E Y

# SERMON XII.

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*The good Soldier of Jesus Christ.*

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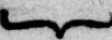
2 TIM. ii. 3.

*Thou therefore endure Hardness, as a  
good Soldier of Jesus Christ.*

**T**H E S E Words are Part of St Paul's S E R M.  
Advice to *Timothy* : and they contain XII.  
in them a single Duty, very proper to be  
insisted on in this Congregation. My pre-  
sent Business therefore shall be heartily to  
labour the Design of the Apostle in the  
Text ; and, as far as possible I can, convince  
you that every Christian, that every good  
Soldier of Jesus Christ, must expect, nay  
must impose upon himself, Severities and  
Hardships ; and by no Means think to  
indulge



SERM. indulge himself in Softness and Ease. To

XII. favour our selves, is what the Devil doth always very artfully, and Flesh and Blood very naturally, suggest to us : and the specious Pretences of Reason and Justice sweeten the Notion, and render it very agreeable to our particular Self-love, *with which Human Nature doth so strongly abound.* Few Men fail to swallow this Bait, tho' Poison and Death lurk upon the Hook ; and therefore our blessed Saviour, who was well acquainted with the Weakness of our Frame, and willing to check this fond Indulgence in us, positively declares, that whosoever will come after him, whosoever will be his true Disciple, must deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow him. To deny our selves, to take up our Cross, to endure Hardness, are Expressions, which strongly import the Christian's Obligations to suffer : and this Suffering may arise two Ways ; either by a Man's own Act, when he inflicts any Thing uneasy upon himself, or by another's Act, when, by the Permission of Providence, Troubles and Afflictions assault us from without. To be acquainted with both these is very essential to a Christian's Duty ; for both are necessary to the Ends of Virtue, and both obliging all those that will follow our Lord in the Way that leadeth unto Life.

But

But my present Design is to speak only S E R M.  
to the former of these, the Duty of Self- XII.  
denial. And may we not then trust the  
ill-natured World, to furnish us with Afflic-  
tions? and will not there constantly arise  
Calamities enough from without, to afflict  
and torment us; but must we seek for Op-  
portunities of our own to make us uneasy  
too? Surely one would much rather think,  
that it should be reasonable and lawful too,  
to indulge every Pleasure and Delight, that  
comes within the utmost Limits of our  
Duty; since the Minutes of these Things  
are so short, and Opportunities so rare. No,  
these are vain Thoughts; the Thoughts of  
Man indeed are but vain, vain even in  
worldly Projects, where they deliberate  
most; and therefore no Wonder if more  
vain in Religion, where they consider so  
much less.

To guard us therefore against the Trea-  
chery of our own Hearts, and the Folly of  
our own Reasoning, we are plainly given to  
know, that if we are willing to arrive at  
that happy Place, whither our Lord and  
Master is gone before, then we must follow  
him, not in the by-Paths of our own pro-  
jecting, but, as *St Peter* expresses it, *in his*  
*very Steps*: we must deny our selves, take  
up our Cross, and endure much Hardness:  
In a Word, we must refuse and controul  
our

S E R M. our Desires, and keep all our struggling Passions under. But must all our Desires and  
 XII.  Passions be so treated? it is to be hoped there are in us some Propensions and Desires, that are truly spiritual and pious, and conformable to the Will of God. And we know it is the main Business of Religion, to nourish and improve such Desires: but then we must observe likewise concerning such Desires, that they are not properly our own: when they are in us, they are not of us; nor can they be derived from the Principles of our corrupt Nature, wherein are rooted all the Oppositions to the Divine Will. So then these Desires are derived from, and inspired into us, by the Influence of God's Grace; and when we relish them, and are led by them, and maintain them against the Insults of our inferior Appetites, it is a Proof that we are advanced to a Pitch above our natural State. For all good Desires are from God; and as they flow from him their Fountain, so they return to him in their Streams. So then the Rule still holds good, and all those Desires, which are properly our own, need Discipline and must be denied; and to convince us more of this, let us view those Desires, which are properly our own: view them did I say! could we really do so, alas! what a dismal Spectacle would they make. Were our Breasts but



for a While, even in this Place, and whilst S E R M.  
we are in our best Moods, that Sea of Glass, XII.  
clear as Crystal to one another; as St *John*  
in his *Revelations* tells us they are always  
unto God: were our Minds but laid open  
for a While, that each could see the natural  
Propensions of his Neighbour's Heart, in the  
same Form that they now commonly stand;  
how should we be startled even at our selves,  
and be galled and ashamed at our own Ap-  
pearances! how horrid and ghastly would  
Envy and Malice look! how confounded  
and ashamed Whisperers and Backbiters!  
how silly and ridiculous all Intrigue and  
Design! and how vain and empty Ambition  
and Covetousness! all these Things are  
blended in our Natures, and were they  
brought to a just Light, the Appearance  
would be monstrous.

It is very plain, that the Desires of Man  
are but of two Kinds: the first are actually  
evil; and the Second are inclined to be so,  
and in the Issue will certainly prove such;  
unless a watchful Discipline prevent them.

Concerning those Desires that are actually  
evil, we may observe that some become so,  
from the Unlawfulness of the Object, which  
therefore the Apostle calls *the Desire of evil  
Things*; that is, of such Things as are for-  
bidden and sinful in their own Nature.

R

Others

SERM.

XII.

Others become evil, not from the Nature of their Object, but from their own Excess; when they run so high and extravagant, that there is no Rest in their Pursuit: but, as *St Peter* expresseth it, *Men walk after their own Desires.* The Expression imports, that then the Desires are grown so strong and masterly, that Men can no longer govern them, but the Desires govern the Men. And therefore they are said to walk after, like Slaves and Vassals, not able to unloose the dishonourable Chain. Now in such an Excess, the Desire of any indifferent Thing becomes evil, because it gives up and subjects the Heart to the Thing desired: and so robs God of his proper Worship, and our selves of our proper Enjoyment.

Concerning therefore these Desires, that are thus actually evil, the Duty is very plain, and there can be no Controversy, but they must be denied. For these are the Enemies which war against the Soul, and if we deny them not, we are Confederates with them, to our own undoing. And yet, to our Shame, these Desires are what seem most dear unto us, and we look upon them as a Part of our selves, nothing is more grateful to us than their Accomplishment, and nothing more otherwise than their Disappointment. We love to hear of them, to be touched by them, and their Care we place nearer to us than

than that of our Souls. But let us reflect what holy *David* mentions, as the severest Judgment on this Side the Grave, God cou'd ever inflict on the stubborn *Israelites*; which is, that *he gave them up to their own Hearts Desires*: a terrible Judgment this! He had indeed before cut them short and distressed them sore, and visited them with many Punishments; but in all these there was a Mixture of Mercy, for hitherto he intended to reclaim them. But at last, finding them incorrigible, he *gave them up to their own Hearts Lusts*, and let them commit Iniquity with Greediness in pure Vengeance, and to fulfil his Justice.

Thus we see that Men may pursue those Things as Gratifications, which God cannot permit them to enjoy, but with a Curse; so that wonderful is the Mischief that any darling Vice can work in us; it can set up Self against Self, and make one Part of our Being destroy another, nay a better with Pleasure. It can put out our Eyes without Complaint, waste our Judgment, and make Stupefaction please: and this it certainly does, when we account our selves happy in the Satisfaction of those Desires, which upon cool Consideration we cannot but allow will make all Men miserable.

But then, besides these Desires which are simply evil, we have likewise in us Desires



S E R M. that are in themselves morally indifferent ;

XII. Desires that were in our Nature, before sin was there, and consequently our Saviour took them upon himself with our Nature, tho' never any Thing sinful was found in him. Of this Kind are the Desires of Ease, Indolence, proper Refreshments and honest Pleasures, and avoiding those Things that are noxious and afflicting to us. These are the most orderly Requests of our Nature, and such as seem most innocent, just and rational to enjoy ; and yet these are such as must be denied too. It is in truth Severity, and much Hardness to deny them ; but the only Inference that we can draw from thence is, that a Christian is a Person, that lies under the strictest Obligation, to be hard and severe to himself ; and this is the Point that I am chiefly to insist on ; that there are voluntary Severities which consist in submitting our selves to many unpleasing Things, which we might possibly avoid ; and in restraining our selves from many pleasing Things, which in their Nature may be lawful. And these Hardships, how difficult soever they may seem, must be submitted to as Occasion offers ; as being absolutely necessary to make a good Christian.

And certainly that Christian is much too delicate, that would excuse himself from this Discipline, in the Christian Warfare ; since  
we

we may find, that every Heathen School re- S E R M.  
quired no less to make an honest and good XII.  
Man. For all their Philosophers (*Epicurus* }  
excepted) have taught, that whoever pro-  
poses to be a virtuous Man, must by no  
Means dream of sensual Pleasure : but on  
the contrary, that Labour and Pains must  
be used, to make any Progress in real Good-  
ness. And therefore they represented Wis-  
dom and Felicity as having built their Pa-  
laces upon the Top of a craggy Rock, to  
which it was most difficult to ascend.

I mention not this to enforce the Pre-  
cepts of Christ, by Heathen Authority ; but  
to hinder our indulgent Thoughts, from per-  
suading ourselves that we can possibly be  
good Christians, without enduring much  
Hardness, when the Heathens did not think  
it possible for any one to be a commonly  
good Man, without doing so. And there-  
fore Christ our Lord, who hath opened the  
Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers, ought  
by no Means to be accounted an hard  
Master, when he imposes no harder Terms,  
than the Heathens thought fit to engage in,  
purely upon the Light of Nature, the meer  
Spur of Conscience and publick Shame. And  
this should make us reflect, how Speechless  
and without Apology, the greatest Part of  
Christians must needs stand in the great  
Day of Enquiry, when it shall appear,

SERM.

XII.

that many moral Heathens have embraced the strictest Discipline, as necessary to Virtue; which generally speaking the Professors of Christianity have cast behind them, only because it is unpleasing.

To correct therefore this Delicacy in us, and to enure us to our Duty, let us consider, that without enduring Hardness, we cannot forsake Vice, and cannot be virtuous. It is possible indeed for a Man, to forsake his Folly, as a surfeited Stomach forsakes its Meat, when Desire itself shall fail. But then, as in this Case there is nothing of Temperance, so in the other there is no Virtue. So *St Paul*, in his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, makes the chief Office of Repentance to consist in Revenge: so that a Man cannot be said to repent, in the Sense of the Gospel, without bringing himself under Severities, and executing Acts of Displeasure upon himself, such as are Mourning and Abstinence, and Vigilance, and Restraint of Delights, and Labour in the Works of Charity, and whatsoever else may conduce to the humbling of our Nature, and taking Revenge upon those Passions, whereby we have offended God. It was to enforce the Necessity of these Acts, that the primitive Church called them Satisfaction, not meaning, as the Church of *Rome* hath since simply taught, that they are of Value to satisfy divine



divine Justice. Nothing but the Blood of SERM.  
Christ, that Lamb without Spot can do so. XII.

But meaning that they satisfy those Conditions, which the Gospel requires of Penitents, as necessary both for our present Correction, and future Caution. Hence it is, that the Christian State is called a Warfare: and hence St *Paul* advises *Timothy*, to endure *Hardness as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ*; for he that will fight the good Fight, must be in continual Engagement, and have his rational Desires always upon their Guard against the sensual, in Order to bring them under and keep them in Obedience. So that in this Warfare there must be no Cessation of Arms, no League, no Truce; for our Enemies are most perfidious, and will never keep the Peace; and therefore we are never out of Danger, but when we are actually fighting. For the Devil will never fly but when we manfully resist. St *Paul* was a Man of Miracles and Visions, and of Sanctity of Life most glorious, and who, one would think, had Mortifications enough from without, being constantly attended with all the open Violence and secret Treachery, that Men or Hell could devise; and yet we still find him fighting against himself, casting down his Mind, as he himself expresseth it, and beating down his Body and bodily Affections. Now we cannot think, that he

SERMON. did this from the Affectation of Singularity,  
 XII. or from a Principle of vain Glory, or from  
 any fond Conceit of Supererogation, or by  
 any simple Mistake of his Judgment. No,  
 he tells us himself why he did so : the Reason is very strong ; least for want of such Discipline he might possibly *be a Cast-away*. Now if this great and good Man was forced to maintain such a continual Fight, and to endure so much Hardness, for fear of being a Cast-away, who among us can be a tolerable good Soldier, can lay down his Arms and be safe ? It is our Business therefore to strive always to keep the Reins of our Passions tight and steddly ; for if we give them a Loose, even into those Enjoyments that are lawful, they are apt to take Head, and run riot, and from that Moment we are in Danger of being worsted by them. For when we suffer our Appetites to have their fill, they always get Strength, and grow masterly, and so become less manageable than before. We should therefore confine our Desires, and keep them out of the Reach of their Quarry, and restrain them even from the lawful Measures of Enjoyment ; by which Means their Powers will grow weak, and our Government firm and secure. But if we too often permit them to the utmost of what is lawful, it is great Odds but we are baffled ; for the precise Limits of law-  
 ful

ful and unlawful are difficult to be distinguished, and *thin Partitions divide their Bounds.* So that if we let our Appetites take their Swing, and run too near the Verge, and slip but one Foot down the Precipice, it is great Odds but we are entirely lost, with out Power of Revocation. SERM.  
XII.

But it is yet further necessary, that as good Soldiers we should endure much Hardness, that should be strict and severe upon our selves, in order to gain those holy Affections, that are preparative to future Glory. Our Apostle tells us that there is a certain Meetness, or Fitness, which is required to be in all those, that shall be Partakers with the Saints in Light. They that hope to have that glorious Change pass upon them, must prepare their Minds with heavenly Thoughts and heavenly Desires. They must have a proper Hunger and Thirst after those Enjoyments, that are in Heaven, and this is vastly different from those wherewith our Appetites are naturally affected.

But then the Question naturally arises, how shall we do this, and how shall we bring such perfective Dispositions into our Souls. We are told concerning our Saviour, Christ himself, that he was made perfect thro' Sufferings; for *it became him for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make*  
the



SERM. *the Captain of their Salvation perfect thro' Sufferings.* It does not indeed from hence follow, that those Sufferings were absolutely necessary for the Perfection of our Saviour, because he wanted to complete no Virtue, nor to subdue no Vice. But his Sufferings were so far necessary, as to complete his Example; for as he was to lead the Way by which many were to pass into Glory, it was necessary that he should be made perfect thro' Sufferings, by Reason no Christian can ever be perfected without those Means. And therefore Sufferings are mentioned in the Christian Covenant as an expresse Condition of future Glory. *If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him, and we are Heirs with Christ if so be we suffer with him.*

And the same Apostle teacheth, that we must thro' much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. Now if the Spirit of God informs us, that Sufferings are of so necessary Importance to our future Happiness, and yet at the same Time does not lay upon us any outward Necessity to suffer; it is plain, that in this Case the Necessity lies upon our selves, to take Care to discipline and correct ourselves; and we have no Reason to think that our Sufferings will lose any of their Virtue, by coming from our own Hands. For when our Saviour says, *Blessed are ye that hunger,* and *Blessed are ye that mourn,*  
he

he does not mean only those that hunger and mourn, because they cannot help it: for sure it is that those Restraints, that we impose upon our selves, will conduce as much to the perfecting of our Nature, and making us humble and sober; as those that are forced upon us by outward Violence. So then there is an inward Discipline, which is altogether as perfective, nay much more than any outward Persecution. There is a Mortification, and continual Watching over ourselves; a Sort of daily Martyrdom, as acceptable to God as the shedding of our Blood.

But after all, we must observe that it is not the Sufferings themselves, simply considered, but the Effect of them, that makes the Christian. And therefore Sufferings are good no longer than they produce Good, and create gracious Dispositions in the Soul that bears them. And this is to be laid down for a Rule in all the Offices of Self-denial, and by observing this we shall preserve our selves from Pride, Vanity, and Confidence; and possess our Souls with Patience, Meekness, and Resignation, the proper Ornaments of a Christian's Mind. And thus it appears, how by enuring ourselves to bear Hardness, Difficulties will cease, and it will be easy for us to fix our Affections on Things above, and not on Things on the Earth.

But

SERM.

XII.

But least it should be alledged, that a Man may possibly be a good Christian, without all these Mortifications, and self-Denials; and why then shou'd a Man so heartily court Misery? I shall further show, how necessary these Things are, in order to bring us acquainted with the most excellent Parts of our Christian Duty.

And first they teach us Humility, which chiefly consists in the true Knowledge of ourselves, and informs us how corrupt, how impotent, how vain, we are, how we depend absolutely upon God's Pleasure every Moment, and yet every Moment merit his Wrath. Now tho' every Man may entertain Speculations, and finely reason upon this Notion of himself, yet he can never rightly know it, that is, feel it, and be intimately and properly affected with it, till such Time as he takes himself to task and enters upon the Discipline of his Mind. Then indeed, when a Man is pinched, or restrained, or languishing, when he is in Struggle or in Conflict with any Passion, and reflects how every little Thing is able to make him miserable, then he proves and learns effectually how little a Thing himself must needs be: and till then he never conceives a Notion of himself, mean enough to fix his own Unworthiness: and further, while a Man holds himself to endure Hardness, there naturally follows



follows another gracious Effect ; and that S E R M.  
is this ; the less he enjoys the less he thinks XII.  
he deserves ; and this is the Perfection of   
Humility ; whereas on the other Side, the  
more a Man allows himself of the Pleasure  
of Life, the more he thinks he deserves, or  
at least the less he thinks of not deserving.  
And then the less he thinks so, the more he  
allows himself in pernicious Pleasure. And  
thus Pride and Indulgence naturally beget,  
and nurse each other ; and will gain us Con-  
quest over these Monsters, but communing  
with our own Hearts, entering into our own  
Minds, and keeping a strict Guard and Dis-  
cipline there. And this will likewise teach  
Compassion, a generous Virtue, which en-  
larges our Souls to a tender Concern for the  
Calamities of others. But for as much as  
Sense is our common School-master, and we  
have but weak Notices of those Things we  
do not feel ; and those Notices we have  
do quickly pass away, it cannot be, that we  
should ever maintain a proper Compassion,  
for what others do or may suffer, unless we  
in some Measure suffer the same our selves.  
It is our Sense therefore, that must both  
instruct and put us in Mind of this Duty,  
and so we find that even our Saviour himself  
went to the School of Experience, for he  
learnt by Sufferings : and the Thing that he  
chiefly learnt was Compassion, and therefore  
he

254 *The good Soldier of Jesus Christ.*

SERMON. he is made a merciful High-Priest: therefore  
XII. fore he is touched with our Infirmities, and  
therefore he is ready to succour us, when  
tempted, because he was made obnoxious  
unto both, even like unto us.

Happy therefore, truly happy are they  
that mourn, for they shall be comforted.  
But on the other Hand, the Prophet de-  
nounceth a Wo to them that are at Ease;  
and the Reason of it is, because they are not  
grieved at the Afflictions of *Joseph*. Want-  
ing nothing, and enduring no Hardness them-  
selves, they are never duly sensible of what  
others want or endure. And from this same  
Root springs the Reason of that common,  
but true, Observation, that Luxury hath al-  
ways been fatal to States and Kingdoms:  
and the Reason is plain, because when Men  
come to indulge themselves, they set up Self  
for the Idol. And this insensibly shrinks  
away the publick Spirit, and extinguishes all  
just Concern for the Publick good. So then  
to restrain and bound our Appetites, to en-  
*dure Hardness*, is of the last Importance to  
us, both in a private and publick Capacity.

But last of all, to endure Hardness will  
greatly assist, and highly advance our De-  
votion. Devotion is the lifting up of our  
Souls unto God, which never rises so high  
and kindly as when it restrains and weans  
it self from sensual Enjoyments; which hath  
a con-

a contrary Bias and Propension upon the S E R M.  
Mind. But as for religious Mortifications and XII.  
Mournings, good *Hezekiah* observes, that  
the Spirit of Man lives in these Things:  
it lives and asserts itself by them, and gets  
Freedom from the Body, and Command  
over the Affections, and Ardour in our De-  
sires, and Power with God.

And thus I have shown in general the  
Nature and Necessity of Self-denial; as for  
the particular Measures of it, they are vari-  
able, according to their particular Circum-  
stances; and they must be left to your pri-  
vate Discretion, to weigh and determine  
them; but with this Caution, favour not  
your selves; be just and impartial in your  
Censures; and divest yourselves as much as  
possible of all selfish Fondness, *Judge your  
selves my Brethren, so that ye be not judged of  
the Lord;* and in fine, *let us all endure Hard-  
ness as good Soldiers here, so that we endure  
none hereafter.*

In fine, if ever we hope to arrive at that  
glorious Place, where Christ our Master is  
preparing Mansions for us, then we must  
deny our selves take up his Cross and follow  
him.

And now what shall I say more? but  
crave your leave and your Patience, to add  
a Word or two by Way of Exhortation to  
you my Brethren, who stand here before

I me,



256 *The good Soldier of Jesus Christ.*

SERMON. me, and who in the most strict literal Sense,  
 XII. have been *good Soldiers*; you who have seen  
 Thousands fall before you, and ten Thousand at your right Hand: you, who for the sake of your Sovereign and your Country, have *endured all Hardships*, you who for the Sake of your poor Bodies, have suffered Life to be driven out of the extreme Parts, in order to keep a little lingering in the Center: you I say, who have undergone all these Things, and under all these Circumstances have behaved as brave Soldiers; you I exhort and command, I call upon you, in the Name of the Lord Christ our great Commander, that you now keep your Posts, that you do not turn grand Cowards at last; but now that as good Soldiers you would endure some little Hardness, for the sake of your poor Souls: that now, since it hath pleased God and your Country, to settle you in a Place of Retirement and Ease; and you have no outward Difficulties to contend with, nor no Provision to make for your selves, but what is spiritual; that you would therefore take unto you *the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil Day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore having your Loins girt about with Truth, and having on the Breast-Plate of Righteousness, and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace above all Things*

*The good Soldier of Jesus Christ.* 257

*Things taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quenck all the fiery Darts of the wicked One; and take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always. that we may all obtain everlasting Life thro' Christ our Lord.*

SERM.  
XII.



S E R M.

# SERMON XIII.

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## *On PATIENCE.*

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LUKE xxi. 19.

*In your Patience possess ye your  
Souls.*

SERM.  
XIII.

**T**HIS is a short Lesson, given us by our Blessed Saviour, to learn in the most difficult Times. And it is impossible to conceive Words more full, more curious, more excellent in their Matter, than these few are. Wonderful are the Expressions of some of the Philosophers; and admirable Rules they give, to direct the Course of human Life. But yet all their Maxims were weak, when compared with this. They had not that Force so to elate our Minds, and make us calm and easy,



easy, in the most difficult Times, and under S E R M. the highest Oppressions. Most of the *Phi-* XIII. *losophers* were well enough acquainted with the common Passions of Mankind; and have left us admirable Rules how to regulate and confine them. But they were Strangers to long Suffering, and forgiving, and forbearing one another; and not one of them, that I can find, counted it all Joy to fall into Tribulation; or well knew how to demean himself when there. But the Christian Law-giver, our great Lord and Master, hath not left us without Hope in the most deplorable Condition. Nay he hath taught us how to make the heaviest Burthen light, and our greatest Misery our highest Comfort and noblest Glory.

And to do this, the Text is the Rule: *In your Patience possess ye your Souls.* Rightly to understand which Words, it will be reasonable for me first to shew, what is meant by *possessing our Souls*: and secondly, to enforce the Practice, by showing the Usefulness of so doing.

First then, let us endeavour to illustrate the Duty of *possessing our Souls in Patience.* Various are the Opinions of the Learned, both antient and modern, concerning the Texture of human Nature, and the different Operations of Flesh and Spirit. But I find that generally, especially the most Christian of

S E R M. them agree, that beside those Endowments,  
 XIII. that we enjoy in common with Brutes and  
 ~~~~~ Plants, that Man hath added to his most  
 curious and excellent Body a rational Soul.  
 These two vastly different, but closely united,  
 the one finite and mortal, subject to Disease,  
 Infirmary and Decay, and at last to Death  
 it self. For to the Dust from whence it  
 came, thither it must return. But the Soul  
 knows no such Change, but, like the Author  
 of our Being, is immortal; the very image  
 of God, a Ray of divine Light, which may  
 indeed by our Sins be stained, and obscured,  
 but can never be extinguished. The Flesh  
 is rebellious and troublesome, prone to all  
 Evil, full it self of Temptations, and easily  
 swayed by them; but the Soul in its Na-  
 ture pure and virgin, and not to be polluted  
 but by Rape and Violence. She is active  
 and alert, and always ready to help and  
 assist her dear Companion the Flesh, whose  
 Passions are strong and unruly, still thirsting,  
 yet never content; proud and troublesome,  
 when mounted on high, raging or dejected,  
 when made low; always desponding, or too  
 full of themselves. Now of those Monsters  
 the Soul hath the Reins: and the Govern-  
 ment of them is committed unto her. And  
 God hath given her Power sufficient, to regu-  
 late and command them, at least so far as  
 to make them pay such a Tribute, as God  
 hath

hath promised to accept for perfect Obedi- S E R M.  
ence. But yet, notwithstanding all this, so XIII.  
great is the Love between these two dear   
Friends, Soul and Body, that the one, out  
of an ill guided Friendship, often complies  
with the irregular Dictates of the other, and  
does not only cease to check the Fury, and  
stop the Tide, but swims down with it, and  
is Partaker of the Folly. For it is certain,  
that our Souls do often make very base and  
mean Compliances, else it would be im-  
possible for the Body to act as generally it  
does. And therefore tho' our Souls, when  
calmly and coolly examined; are always in  
the right: yet a sudden Gust, and Hurry  
of her sensual Passion will be apt to overset  
her good Nature: and the Weakness of the  
Flesh, which she but slightly indulged at  
first, will in Time grow masterly and over-  
spread and obscure all her Faculties. And  
from hence it follows that the Soul and Body  
both act by Consent, and are free Agents  
in what they do: and therefore their Plea-  
sure, as well as their Pains is, and will be  
mutual; for if my Friends and Companions  
persuade and prevail upon me; if Sinners  
intice, and I consent unto them; I must still  
remember, that it was in my own Power,  
whether I would consent or no. And there-  
fore it is unreasonable to think, that I shall  
not be Partaker of the Punishment, as well



SERM. as of the Guilt. But if I, by my stronger  
 XIII. Reason, can prevail upon my Tempter, and  
 keep him from the Folly; then I prevent  
 both his and my own Misery, and so both  
 will be partakers of the Pleasure: he of not  
 doing evil, and I of doing much good.

Now this being thus premised, it leads us  
 naturally to the Thing; and the Question  
 before us, viz. How shall we then so *possess*  
*our Souls*, that they may not loose the reins,  
 and let the whole Man swerve into any  
 loose and irregular Appetite. And here I  
 will not spend any farther time, in con-  
 sidering any Difficulty, that may arise from  
 the Words, *possess ye your Souls*: But de-  
 liver them in the most plain and obvious  
 Sense, and as our blessed Saviour certainly  
 designed them here; whose intent by them  
 was to prepare his Disciples against the *ap-  
 proaching* Dangers, and such as without  
 great Care and Watchfulness, would be  
 enough to shock the most resolved of them.  
 For he tells us, that *Nation shall rise against*  
*Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom, and*  
*great Earthquakes shall be in divers Places,*  
*and Famines and Pestilence and fearful Sights,*  
*and great Signs shall there be from Heaven,*  
*and they shall lay their Hands on you, and*  
*persecute you; delivering you to the Syna-*  
*gogues, and into Prison, being brought before*  
*Kings and Rulers for my Name sake; and ye*  
*shall*

*shall be betrayed both by Parents, and Bre-* SERM.  
*thern and Kinsfolks and Friends, and some* XIII.  
*of you shall they cause to be put to death, and*  
*ye shall be hated of all Men for my Name's*

*sake.* What a dreadful account is this? And how would it startle the best of Men, being unable to secure ourselves against such mighty Evils? And we cannot choose but think, that the Apostles laboured under terrible Apprehensions, upon the account of these Things. Our Saviour therefore, in order to fortify their Minds against such Terrors, bids them in the first place not be careful or anxious, nor think of any studied Arts and Contrivances of escaping; for that he would give them a Mouth and Wisdom which not all their Adversaries should be able to gain-say, nor resist. And then when these Things should come upon them, for their Practice he only adds this short Rule, *In your Patience possess ye your Souls:* That is, be sure that at this time your Souls be rightly possessed of the Chair, that no inordinate Passion usurp and bear Rule; but that right Reason take place, and govern your Actions. For if any of the fleshly Appetites should then have the ascendant, the consequence would be fatal. And this seems to be our Saviour's own Interpretation of these Words, for in one of the following Verses he adds; *take heed and beware to your*  

S 4

*selves,*

SERM. *selves, least at any time your Hearts be over*  
 XIII. *charged with surfeiting and Drunkenness,*  
 { *and the Cares of this Life, and so that Day come*  
*upon you unawares; when you are not pos-*  
*essed of your Souls: When your Souls do*  
*not possess, and bear Sway, as they ought to*  
*do in every reasonable, but especially in*  
*every Christian, Man.*

But here it must not be imagined, that it is possible for any of us, to dispossess our selves of our Souls, so that they shall cease to be, and we hear no more of them. This would be glad News indeed, to that Herd of loose and profligate Wretches, who have no farther View than the present Enjoyment of sensual Pleasure, and are ready to compound not to be hereafter; provided they might with Ease indulge their Senses here. This, though it is the most sordid and inglorious Thought that can possibly enter into the Mind of a rational Creature, and a worse Bargain by much than *Esau's*, and the most poor and abject State that any Creature can wish for; yet it is what God will not allow, for, though these two old Acquaintance may part for a Season, yet they must meet again whether we are willing or not. Be we all must, and that for ever, only with this vast and astonishing Difference, some will be happy and others miserable. And this great Disparity will chiefly arise from this single Point



Point, whether we have rightly *possessed our* SERM.  
*Souls* here or not. If our Lusts and Passions XIII.  
have had the Ascendant here, then we can  
expect no Possession hereafter, but a Scene of  
Horror and endless Despair. But if our  
Souls have governed our Actions, and our  
rational part prevailed, then as our Comforts  
will be great, and surpassing in this Life; so  
will our Happiness be infinite in the other.

And of this the very Consideration of the  
Powers of the Soul, which every natural  
Man must feel, is enough to convince us;  
for I would appeal to the frank Confession  
of the most profligate Sinner, and doubt not  
if he will once be honest and sincere, but  
that he will tell me, that when he abandon-  
ed Virtue, and the Possession of his Soul,  
and gave himself up to be led captive by  
Sin and Folly; that even then, however  
strong and delusive the Charms might be,  
yet still some Thoughts would intervene, in  
which the dawning of the Soul would flash  
upon him, and fill his Mind with anxious  
Thoughts, and frightful Ideas, and use him as  
the Angel of God did the Prophet *Balaam*,  
stand in his way, and at least make him  
halt, and consider what will be the fatal  
Entertainment, when he arrives at the end  
of so vile a Journey. And though he may  
be mounted on his headstrong Passions,  
which when they have got the Reins, are  
not

S E R M. not easily restrained, and the Sinner pleased  
 XIII. with the smoothness of the Motion, may  
 with proud *Phaëton*, disdain, ride aloft, and  
 leave all Virtue behind ; yet at every short  
 turn, for many such there are in the La-  
 byrinths of Sin, he will be apt to look back  
 and consider the place from whence he  
 came ; and when he looks forward be afraid  
 and amazed to think whither he is going.  
 These are the natural Workings of every  
 Man's Mind ; and however wicked a Man  
 may be, so he will possess, and so much Pos-  
 session his Soul will have of him. Now these  
 are strong and convincing Arguments of the  
 Power and eternal Duration of the Soul,  
 which the most wicked cannot be without,  
 that God hath implanted in us, in order to  
 leave Mankind without Excuse. So that be-  
 fore him we may all be dumb ; and no Flesh  
 living justified. But then, on the other  
 Hand, when we *in Patience possess our Souls*,  
 and resign all our Passions and Interests to  
 be guided by Reason ; how much stronger  
 then are their Powers, and how much more  
 convincing their Motives to Virtue. Here  
 I may make my appeal to all good Christians,  
 who by pleasing Experiences constantly feel  
 these divine Illapses, and have the greatest  
 repast and delight, in the Entertainment of  
 and Conversation with the Soul.

These

These Things need no Proof, and they S E R M.  
are better conceived, than the best Pen can XIII.  
possibly relate. For who can describe the  
many noble Faculties of the Soul, and the  
Operations of them? We feel, and know  
that we are possessed of these warm and  
active Principles, by the heavenly Transports  
they so often afford us: But who can trace  
Thought, or find out that secret Recess  
where Memory is lodged? Or where is the  
Philosopher that can inform us, by what  
Power the Mechanism of our Frame is put  
in Motion, or upon what Wheels it runs?  
How a good Christian can form so strong  
an Idea in his Mind of our blessed Saviour,  
as there to see his Birth, and easily con-  
ceive his wonderful Incarnation; that we  
can travel with him into *Egypt*, and at his  
return almost hear him among the Doctors;  
that we can go with him from place to  
place, during the whole Course of his Mi-  
nisty; and be well acquainted with his  
Miracles, and at last attend him before  
*Pilate*, and thence to *Golgotha*; and lively  
represent to ourselves every Agony and Con-  
vulsion, that he suffered there; nay, that  
after a wonderful manner we descend and  
rise again with him; and even at this time  
our Souls have an open and free Conversation  
with him, though in Heaven? And to con-  
vince Mankind of this, I doubt not, but if  
there



SERM. there were occasion, the World is not yet  
XIII. quite so bad, but that some are left, who  
would follow the many Saints and Martyrs,  
that have gone before, and sign this Truth  
with their Blood. But if any Man should  
object, that these are seraphic Strains, and  
what the greatest Part of the World are  
Strangers to, and therefore will presume to  
call them in Question; let him descend into  
himself, and a little consider the wonderful  
Operations of the Soul, that are common  
to him, and all Mankind; here he can in a  
moment's time waft him to *Japan*; and if  
he hath any Friends there, can by a sort  
of intuitive and intellectual Knowledge,  
maintain a Conversation with them: And  
farther, how often do we lay out Scenes of  
Honour and Power for ourselves, and deck  
our Equipage with all imaginable Pomp  
and Grandure; and fix the Ideas of these  
Things in our Minds, build those Castles so  
firm, as some times not without Difficulty  
to persuade ourselves they are real. Now if  
the Soul hath this great Power, Influence  
and Command, where by her Nature she is  
and ought to be most a Stranger, we can  
by no means dispute, but that her Authority  
is as great at home, and in her native  
Country. Therefore she can with more ease  
give us a taste and relish of Heaven, and  
heavenly Things, and with greater Safety  
conduct

conduct us thither, and that she may do so, SERM.  
we must in *Patience* possess her: Which leads XIII.  
me in the

Second place, to consider the Usefulness of our so doing. And can there possibly arise any higher use to us, than what I even now mentioned: Which was, that it leads us to the Mansions of Bliss? But as this is a Lesson to be learnt before we get thither, and to be practised in our Pilgrimage here; my chief design in this Place is to shew the Usefulness of *possessing our Souls in Patience* in every Stage of a Christian's Warfare, hereupon Earth. And first let us consider, what a vast Advantage it must be to the Apostles and primitive Christians, when labouring under those dreadful Circumstances, which our Saviour foretels just before the Text. The Passion of Fear is very strong, and the love of Life yet stronger; Indulgence and Ease are bewitching Things, and this makes Cold and Nakedness more terrible. Liberty and Freedom are the Darlings of Mankind; and this makes Bonds and Imprisonment so grievous. Honour and Esteem is what all Men court; and this makes them so careful to avoid Shame and Reproach. Now when a Man is assaulted on one side, by all these Evils, and on the other by these flattering Hopes: As the Case of the Apostles and Christians then was, which way could they turn

SERMON. turn, or what Course could they possibly  
 XIII. steer? They had indeed been before taught,  
 that they must forsake all Things, that was  
 near or dear unto them; and take up their  
 Cross and follow their great Lord and Master.  
 But to put this in practice is not so easy, as  
 to embrace it for a Doctrine: And there-  
 fore when it came to the Trial, how must  
 it shock, and what strong Convulsions must  
 it put human Nature in? It was absolutely  
 necessary therefore, that some recourse should  
 be had to some powerful Remedy, to cherish  
 their languishing Spirits, and support their  
 frail and drooping Bodies. Now the great  
 Antidote that our Saviour prescribed them,  
 was *in your Patience possess ye your Souls.*  
 This they make Application to, and it failed  
 not of the desired Effect. This banished all  
 their Fears, and revived all their Hopes:  
 This gave them a glorious prospect of a  
 future State, and fairly represented to them  
 the Folly of all the Poms and Vanities of  
 this wicked World. This carried them to all  
 sortsof Death, with Pleasure and in Triumph,  
 and at last crowned them with everlasting  
 Glory. O blessed Change! Most happy  
 Creatures! Who would not wish to have  
 lived in that Age, even to have felt their  
 Persecutions, could we with them *in our*  
*Patience have possessed our Souls?* But let us  
 not be too fond of Misery; for even in our  
 best



best Estate, and under this glorious Sun-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
shine of the Gospel, which in the best of <sup>XIII.</sup>  
Reigns we enjoy; yet there are cool Shades  
enough, that all Ranks of Men walk in,  
where if they are not well acquainted with  
their Guide, and *in Patience possess their*  
*Souls*, they will certainly be bewildered, and  
their Mistake will be fatal.

As for those that are at ease, how absolutely necessary is it; for them to learn this Lesson; for a Christian never moves in a more difficult Sphere, than when he is mounted on high: There like false Meteors they usually shine but a short Space, and, generally speaking, make their exit in a gloomy manner. I do not say but that some Examples may be found in all Ages, even in this our Day, of Persons moving in the highest Orb, who like fixed Stars keep their constant and certain Station, so that no height can turn their Brains, nor dispossess them of their Souls. But these Things are rare, Christianity generally loves a lower Ground, and is not apt to flourish in a richer Soil: For Riches are growing Weeds, that are wont to top and choak our humble Religion. They by their Nature make us humourfome and difficult, peevish and morose, proud and vain, unapt to be pleased, and ready to be inflamed, and impatient under the least Afflictions. Now these are fore  
Evils,

SERMON. Evils, and will certainly corrupt, and deface  
 XIII. the whole Man ; if there be not found a  
 speedy Cure. And of what excellent Use is  
 Patience here, that like the Prophet's Salt, it  
 will sweeten all these bitter Streams ; so that  
 when they return to the larger Fountain,  
 and reach the Heart, like the Waters  
 of *Jordan*, they will wash it clean, revive  
 the Man, and make him able to *possess his*  
*Soul*.

Then he will think it unreasonable to value  
 himself by reason of his Wealth, which is  
 no part of him, nor to spend them upon his  
 Lusts, nor to hide them in a Napkin, but  
 to use them to the Glory of God, and the  
 Good of Mankind ; that so having done like  
 a good and faithful Servant, he may be ad-  
 mitted into the Joys of his Master.

But if our Lot be cast in a low Degree, so  
 that we have little else to do, and in a manner  
 cannot but submit help, and be patient, we  
 must not think that we are out of danger,  
 or imagine that Religion will grow in us of  
 its own accord, and without our Labour.  
 No certainly ! there are many Temptations  
 that will assault us here that require our  
 strict Application to guard us from. Men  
 in this Station, are apt to murmur and re-  
 pine, be angry with God and his Providence,  
 this makes him troublesome and unquiet  
 disturbing his own, and the peace of his  
 Neighbour,

Neighbour; and often carries him so far as S E R M.  
to commit some Act either of secret Treachery or open Violence, as will render him XIII.  
the just Object of Shame and Revenge, both to God and Man. For which it is reasonable he should be cut off from human Society, as a Pest to Mankind, and no longer suffered to remain in the Land of the Living. And what a sad Calamity is this, and therefore how pleasing the Cure, nay how grateful even to Flesh and Blood, the Path that leads out of such thick Darknes? And this Patience naturally doth, for when once that gets Possession in our Souls, it will teach the poorest Mortal, quietly to resign himself into the Hands of his Maker, and to labour diligently to do his Duty, and get his Bread by the Sweat of his Brow, in that Station in which God hath placed him. And since Providence saw that Condition best for him, therewith he will be content.

But there is a middle Region between these two extremes of Riches and Poverty, and in which, generally speaking, the greatest numbers of happy Persons, if any such there be here below, are to be found. But even there are a great many pressures of Life, which will render us very uneasy, if we quit the Possession of our Souls, and grow impatient. Amongst all Mankind there is

T

Anger,



SERM. Anger, and Wrath, and Clamour, and evil  
 XIII. speaking, whispering and backbiting, and  
 these Things are the Bane of Society, and  
 when indulged, we disband and are no  
 longer reasonable Creatures: But become  
 Beasts of Prey one against another. Then  
 the Master oppresses the Servant, and the  
 Servant rebels and betrays his Master: Then  
 all the Bonds of Friendship are broken, and  
 no Man speaks the Truth, or is safe with  
 his Neighbour. Nay even the Government  
 of private Families is thus often dissolved,  
 and the sacred Tie becomes a Rope of Va-  
 nity, and a Scene of Strife. So that there  
 can be no Happiness, no Ease, no Quiet,  
 in any Condition of Life, if we in *Patience*  
 do not *possess our Souls*. For Things will  
 not always run to our Minds, and just as  
 we would have them; and then there is no  
 way to prevent Mischief, if on every slight  
 occasion our Passions take Fire, unless Pa-  
 tience step in to cease the Storm. If she  
 lead reason to the Helm, and give us Pos-  
 session of our Souls, then all is well. Then  
 we shall presently blame ourselves and be  
 sorry, wonder at our own Indiscretion, to  
 think how we could find in our Hearts to  
 deal so madly. But though this noble Vir-  
 tue is of admirable use in every part of our  
 tedious Pilgrimage here; yet is it chiefly so,  
 and in the highest Measure to be found as

we decline, and draw towards our Journey's End. Age naturally brings along with it a load of Infirmities, which are apt to burthen and discompose our Tempers; so that we shall be easily ruffled at every little Accident, that cannot be foreseen, nor avoided. And then when our Minds as well as our Bodies are weak, what an heap of Disorder shall we be, if Patience do not take place? Nothing that can be said or done for us will please, but Friends and Strangers will be alike to us, and both looked on with a disregarding Eye. We shall have no Peace, neither from without, nor within. God and Conscience will not be satisfied, and those around us will not be able to satisfy us. But if, with the holy Psalmist, we can say *in the multitude of my Sorrows, thy Comforts, O Lord, have refreshed my Soul, and given me the patient and quiet Possession of her*, then what Scene of Joy and Consolation spreads itself; then all the Flood-gates of Transport are loosed, Weariness and Pain are forgotten, and Sickness is no more; then whether Age or a nimbler Disease be passing us Home, then we shall be able to reason with ourselves, and say, happy Man that I am, now in this dark and gloomy Time, in this Shadow of Death, now to fear no Evil. Time was, when I, like the rest of the busy World, was very anxious

S E R M. and careful what I should eat, and what I  
XIII. should drink, and what I should put on.  
I ran here and there, and grudged if I  
was not satisfied. But all these Things are  
gone like a Dream and a Shadow, and  
passed away like a watch in the Night. And  
I find not the least Satisfaction in any thing  
I have acquired, nor in any thing I at pre-  
sent possess, but my Soul and her Joys are  
unspeakable. How foolish and ignorant  
was I then, even as a Beast before thee,  
when the hurry of my Passions furiously  
drove in the fruitless pursuit of sensual Plea-  
sure! Strange Madness that made me so  
careful, concerning my short Duration here,  
so apprehensive of Time, and so neglective  
of Eternity! But O blessed change! And  
the wonderful Goodness of my great God,  
who hath given me to know in these, tho'  
my latter Days, *the Things that belong to my  
Peace; before they were quite hid from me;*  
so that the Grave might have swallowed up  
my Soul, as well as Body, and carried me  
to the Land of thick Darkness. And I  
should never have lifted up mine Eyes but  
in Hell. Then I should have been too late  
convinced, of what to my eternal Comfort  
I am better assured of now, that I should  
have profited nothing, if I had gained the  
whole World and lost my own Soul; and  
that there is nothing a Man can give in  
exchange



exchange for his Soul. May we all thus **SERM.**  
reason now, so as to make us wise unto **XIII.**  
Salvation, *least we in the End buy our Con-*  
*viction too dear, even with eternal Misery here-*  
*after.* Such Reasonings as these, such Pra-  
ctice of Patience will give us a Foretast of  
our future Happiness, and at last lead us to  
the Mansions of Bliss; to which Place of  
eternal Rest and Glory, God of his infinite  
Mercy soon bring us all through Christ.



# SERMON XIV.

*Occasioned by the Plague at Marseilles.*

PSAL. cvii. 43.

*Whofo is wife will ponder thefe Things  
and they fhall understand the  
loving Kindnefs of the Lord.*

SERM.  
XIV.

THESE Words clofe one of the moft beautiful Songs in the whole Book, that carries *David's* Name. There is fome Variation in the different Translations; but fuch only as would ferve the Vanity of boasted Learning, and be of no ufe to you, for me to explain. Nor does it fignify whether it be a Composition of *Mofes*, the Royal Prophet, or any other Sacred Writer: For fuch a mixture there is in the Book of *Pfalms*

*Psalms.* Sufficient it is for you to know, SERM.  
XIV.  
that this, with the rest, is admitted into the Canon of Holy Writ; and that the whole is filled with the most lively Images of God's Judgments, and of his Mercies.

Let us look coolly into the Age and Nation, in which we live; and consider the Vein of Conversation, that at present prevails; how eager the Pretenders to Knowledge are in the pursuit; how full and transported with scraps of prophane Writings, or the Wits, as they call them, of our Time; and at the same time how dull and insipid, how empty, how ignorant they are of the Scriptures, those lively Oracles of God, which as far exceed all human Wit, Learning, or Devices, as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, and God greater than Man. Nay, if there was room, or time, there would be no difficulty for me to shew, that there is scarcely to be found a nervous Line, in any of the Heathen Moralists, but what is borrowed from the Sacred Pages. For it is plain, that all the Learning of the *Egyptians*, and from them downwards into *Greece* and *Rome*, is of *Jewish* extract, and so come from the Sacred Fountains of Divine Revelation. What I mean by all this, is to fix in your Minds a just Sense of the Words before you; which carry in them a strong Conclusion from certain Premises going be-



SERM. fore, and couched under the most forcible  
XIV. Expressions.

I must only at present repeat two or three of them, the whole being too long, and must be left to your private Meditations. At present consider we these few Words: *He brought down their Heart through Heaviness, they fell down and there was none to help: Their Soul abhorred all manner of Meat, and they were even hard at Death's Door, so when they cried unto the Lord in their Trouble, he delivered them out of their Distress. He sent his Word and healed them, and they were saved from their Destruction: And just after, a most remarkable Description in these Words; They that go down to the Sea in Ships, and occupy their Business in great Waters: These Men see the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep. For at his Word, the stormy Wind ariseth which lifteth up the waves thereof: They are carried up to Heaven, and down again to the Deep; their Soul melteth away because of the Trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken Man, and are at their Wit's End. So when they cry unto the Lord in their Trouble, he delivereth them out of their Distress. For he maketh the Storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still. And then soon follows this most strong and just Conclusion; the Righteous will consider this and*

*and rejoyce, and the Mouth of all Wicked-ness shall be stopped. Whofo is wise, ponder these Things and they shall understand the loving Kindness of the Lord:* Which Words, in the Light that I have set before you, very naturally and clearly point to us the great, the most reasonable, the most manly Duty of Consideration, that we would not let Time roll over our Heads, without Thought; and be even as Beasts before him; nor let the Circumstances, the Providences, the Judgments, nor the Mercies of God, which happen in our Days, pass without Reflection or Application to ourselves; and so we become never the better for his Chastisements, nor his loving Kindness; but that we would seriously weigh and consider every Thing of Moment, that happens either to our Neighbour or ourselves: So that we may be able rightly to judge, how to behave in Glory to God, when we *see the Wonders he doth for the Children of Men.*

When we see, or hear of a destroying Angel abroad, and feel not the least Effects of his Fury, how ought we then to praise God for his Goodness; and what manner of Persons ought we to be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness? This is the Duty I intend at this Time to enforce; and the manner of doing it I choose to be this; to consider,

SERM.

XIV.

SERMON. consider, as I have just now hinted, the  
 XVI. Measure of God's Providence for some Years  
 last past towards ourselves. From which  
 Consideration, to every pious and well disposed Christian, his Duty of Praise will naturally arise.

Consider we then what Vials of Wrath, what pouring forth of Vengeance, have lately fallen upon a neighbouring Nation. For under such publick Capacity, I at present intend to consider ourselves and our Neighbours. Let us then but a little look back, and view them just got out of a long, expensive, and bloody War; a War that led their Enemies (for so then we were) almost to the Gates of their Capital: And most of their Veteran Troops to the Gates of Death: A War that turned them to no other account, but confusion of Face, but to us all Triumph and Rejoicing. I wish I could say the same concerning the Peace too; but that Peace, however managed by us, to be so very advantageous to them, they had not long obtained; not long enough to rally their scattered Forces, and unite their Strength in order to return the Blow upon us with double Violence; which might possibly have been the Consequence of our Indiscretions; but God who sitteth on high, and surely regardeth what is done by the Children of Men; that God who hath  
 hitherto



hitherto delivered us, and who we hope S E R M.  
will still deliver us, though most unde- XIV.  
serving; he let loose a destroying Angel  
upon them, and tinged their Air with a  
pestilential Blast. Instead of Life, they drew  
in Death, many Places were filled with dead  
Bodies; and the pale Conqueror stood tri-  
umphant over heaps of the slain. Neither  
Youth, nor Age were free, nor Innocence  
secure; nor Sex distinguished. The Phy-  
sician died in the Chamber, and the Priest  
at the Altar: Nor could the most Learned  
plead an Imparance. Those, who were yet  
alive, and not shut up, abandoned their  
Houses, and like Ghosts in horrid mein,  
walked the Streets; where, till Death should  
stop their Cry, nothing was to be heard but  
Lamentation; and one yet untouched loudly  
praying for Life, and Food to sustain it;  
another in his pangs as earnestly crying for  
Death. Here you might see the yearnings  
of a tender Mother, offering the Paps to  
the sucking Infant, and dying in the at-  
tempt. There the loving Husband, extend-  
ing his Arms for the long and last Farewel.  
And this produces a sort of cruel Tender-  
ness; for no Separation being admitted, the  
beloved Wife drops into the Embraces of her  
Spouse, and of Death too in the same Moment.

These Circumstances are some of the  
Dregs of that bitter Cup of Trembling,  
which

SERM. which that unhappy People drank deep of.

XIV. But yet these are but light upon the Balance, when compared with those ponderous Thoughts, heavier than Mountains, that must then afflict the Wicked. For what are the Languishings of the Body, when compared with the Terrors of the Mind? When a Man looks back upon his past Life, and considers his own Vileness and Turpitude, and looks forward, and can expect to see nothing, but Hell yawning for him; and no Comfort, no Reprieve, nothing but that reproachful Sentence whispering in his Breast, *thou Fool, this Moment shall thy Soul be required of thee*; Good God! What Tongue of Men or of Angels can express this? What Reason can we give, that this at the same time was not our Case? Or what Reason to expect that it may not be? Nothing but the infinite Mercies of God. It would be vain Fondness in us to dream of, or urge, natural Causes, or think them at a distance so remote, as not to affect us. It is indeed true, that God doth mostly make use of second Causes, to bring about his Providence, and all the Elements are at his command, to execute his Will. Besides his Angels are Spirits, flames of Fire, and as quick as Lightning to execute his Commands: So that no distance of Place, no Region, no Climate can

can screen us. And when the Iniquity of a SERM.  
Nation is full, God will not fail to visit, XIV.  
nor to be avenged of them. 

And this we have experienced, within the Memory of some yet alive ; when our own great and mighty City, and many Parts of the Nation beside, were in the same languishing Condition.

And I am afraid that when we seriously consider, and weigh ourselves in a right Balance ; that upon a just Calculation, it will appear that we have as highly provoked Heaven as they. For though it may, with too much Reason be urged, that they are full of Error and Delusion, an idolatrous and superstitious People, and have covered themselves with willful Darkness, almost as with a Garment ; than which scarcely any Thing can bode worse to a Nation : Yet it is as plain, that we, notwithstanding our being so proud of the shining Name of Reformed ; yet that all Vice, Irreligion, Heresies, (may I not say Atheism ?) like a Pestilence, rage amongst us. And, what is one of the strongest Symptoms of the grand Contagion itself, I know it may further be urged, the Treachery, the Insincerity, the Prevarications of those People, both with God and Man. These are Abominations, that even some of the very Doctrines of their Church indulge them in, and what can  
we



SERM. we say for ourselves under like Accusation?

XIV. It is true indeed, that our most holy and undefiled Religion does not only forbid, but abhor, and detest such horrible Practices.

And yet it is but too apparent, that we have ever been fond of, and vile Imitators of their Folly. This all History is full of, nay we have lately run headlong into one of the deepest Pits, the most contradicting and destructive Folly, and with our Eyes open, and for no other Reason, but because they led the Dance. And as for their Treachery, Prevarications, and Insincerity; here let us be dumb, and not open our Mouths; we whom no Oaths can bind, nor Vows awe, nor Laws restrain. Else what is the meaning of that terrible Cry, that is so constantly heard amongst us, of Murders, Treasons, Rebellions, Sins of Witchcraft, the practice of this Age and Nation, want Words to describe them. The Foulness of the present Time is not fit to be believed, was not the Evidence too strong. And if there were not some few yet left amongst us, who mourn in secret for these Things, we must by this Time have become like *Sodom*, and have been made like unto *Gomorrhah*. These are Things; that no Man when awake can avoid seeing, nor any good Christian consider, but must, in the Words of

of holy *David*, earnestly pray, *O my Soul* SERM.  
XIV.  
*come thou not into their Secrets.*

And now after all this Unworthiness of ours, so equal, I am afraid in some Measure beyond, our Neighbours; yet still see the Goodness and loving Kindness of the Lord towards us. We still in great abundance enjoy Health and Plenty, most desirable Blessings of this Life; but then, still to make them greater, and delightful to us, we enjoy our Liberties, and our Laws, and our holy Religion too, free from the Bondage of Tyranny and Popery.

And after all our Dangers, and all our Fears, notwithstanding all the open Violence, and Secret Treachery of our Enemies, our invaluable Privileges are still preserved to us, and in order to keep them so, we have, (God be thanked) a KING sitting on the Throne of his Ancestors, who is not only firmly attached to our Religion, but who hath hitherto made, and still resolves to make, the Measure of our Laws the Rule of his Practice. And to continue this to latest Time, we have a large Progeny to fill the Succession, fixed in those Principles of Reformation, which only under God have made, and which only can keep, this an happy Nation.

And now can any Man, who truly loves himself, his Country, or his Religion, forbear

SERM. bear to rejoyce, to rejoyce aloud and give

XIV. Thanks, to *praise the Lord for his Goodness,*  
 and declare the Wonders he hath done for us,

the ungrateful *Children of Men*. We should thankfully adore the Goodness and Mercy of God, who, notwithstanding all our unhappy Divisions and Contentions, and the unwearied Attempts of our *Romish* Adversaries, which have often, since the Reformation, given great Convulsion, both to our Church and State; yet still Providence timely interposed and saved and delivered. May we ever preserve a grateful Sense of such distinguishing Favours to us, never to provoke God by our Sins to give us up at any time, into the Hands of those Men, whose Mercies are cruel. The Truth is, that at present, humanly speaking, we seem to be out of all Danger; we are able to chastise our Enemies, and indulge our Friends, and the Balance of *Europe* seems now indisputably to be here; and we are placed so by Providence, in the midst of the Waters, and at present the Coasts so well defended, that we seem to be apprehensive of no Power but our own. And Truth is, nothing but ourselves can make us miserable; And this our Contentions may produce. I own, it often creates in me some sad Reflections, when in Conversation I hear those unreasonable Jealousies,  
 I those



those rash Censures on our Neighbours, S E R M.  
who perhaps differ from us only in the XIV.  
manner of promoting publick Good. We  
should therefore make all the charitable Allowances possible to our Neighbour, remembering that we ourselves are liable to Mistakes, and though their Judgments may differ from ours, in the Means, yet we may both aim at the same End, the Glory of God and the Good of their Country. So that if we cannot join in the manner of proceeding, and think exactly alike, yet let us forbear to censure their Intentions. That is putting ourselves in the room of God, for to him only the Secrets of all Hearts are known. It is really Matter of Uneasiness, in some Conversations, that you shall not be allowed to be a good Christian, nor a good Subject, without a slavish Compliance, with what is often unreasonably and foolishly said. These are the *Lusts*, *that war in our Members*, and bring Contentions; that may end in our Ruin; whereas a little Christian Humility, and tender Behaviour would soon bring us to an Agreement in our Sentiments, or at least dispose us so modestly to differ, that it may be without the breach of Charity.

Upon the whole of what hath been said, it plainly appears, what great Reason we have to praise and to bless God, for his mani-

SERM.

XIV.

fold and great Mercies; and at the same time as great Reason, to be constantly and carefully solicitous, for the continuance of these Blessings, from Generation to Generation, that we would take the Wise Man's Advice, and ponder the Paths of our Feet, and let all our Ways be for ever established. I cannot help repeating to you, much to this purpose, a very fine Thought of the Prophet *Isaiab* dressed in most curious Words; they are these, *He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the Gain of Oppressions, and shaketh his Hands from holding of Bribes, and stoppeth his Ears from hearing of Blood, and shutteth his Eyes from seeing Evil, he shall dwell on high, his Place of Defence shall be the Munition of Rocks, Bread shall be given him, and his Waters shall be pure.* And if this is true, in a private Capacity, assuredly more so with regard to Nations and Kingdoms; which as they are Societies and Bodies of Men, a great deal of the Good or Evil allotted, must be temporal and in this Life. Not that any thing virtuously done here, in a publick Capacity, shall miss its future and singular Reward; but undoubtedly shall the good Man shine in a brighter Glory. So then, my Brethren, if we have any regard to our present, or our future Happiness, if we have any Love to God,

God, our King, our Country, or ourselves; SERM.  
if we have Bowels of Mercy to our Neigh- XIV.  
bours, any Love of Christ Jesus, if we are  
in any measure wise, then we will ponder  
*these Things, and we shall understand the*  
*loving Kindness of the Lord.*

But, last of all, as we ought in the most  
humble and grateful Manner, to bless God,  
who has put us under so many happy Di-  
stinctions of Providence, and has so often  
interposed for our Preservation; so we  
should acknowledge the blessed Instruments  
that convey these to us. We owe therefore  
all the Returns possible of Obedience, Duty,  
Zeal, and Gratitude to his MAJESTY,  
and, next to him, to those under him, by  
whose careful Administration our Lives are  
all made (if we ourselves will not make  
them otherwise) easy and happy. It is we  
ourselves must keep them so, by a quiet and  
dutiful Deportment: Which that we may  
all practise, may God, of his infinite Mercy  
grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

F I N I S.





